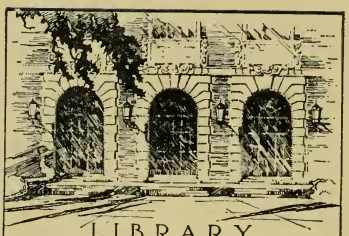

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THE

MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

A Romance.

BY

GEORGE STEPHENS.

"A scholar's fancy,
A quab, 'tis nothing else — a very quab."
FORD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

MANUSCRIPT X.

"Antonia's ignorance, was not proof against the freedom of his behaviour."

M. G. Lewis.

Suppose we resume our narrative, just where Maximilian Pereny sprung, from where he was stationed near Bathori, to encounter some one or other, who, he concluded, had ensconced himself, within the convenient shadow of a neighbouring porch.

On reaching the spot, his eyes searched out the moving figure of a man, in the extreme gloom, who seemed in the act of retiring. Maximilian, without an instant's deliberation, darting before the stranger, to intercept his supposed purpose, accosted him, in his accustomed overbearing language. The man, at first, made no reply, but eyed his questioner, for a moment, from head to foot, in silence, and with an air of contempt. He himself, was clad in a kind of half Wallachian, half national garb, an equipment which, however unprofessional and unassured, was not especially

remarkable at a time, that Hermanstadt, owing to the confluence of adventurers, known and unknown, teemed with every variety of national costume. The Wallachian mantle, with its facings of fur, did not wholly hide the ornamented hose, of the brightest blue, and the doliman, or jacket, with its innumerable silver buttons. In one respect, his appearance might warrant circumspection, his features being hidden behind a dark vizor, which closed under the immense brimmed hat, that slouched over his shoulders.

"Show your face, poltroon!" such was the pleasant salutation of the highly polished Obergespann.*

"Away, fool!" was the no less polite rejoinder, retorted, after a minute's pause, in a low, and somewhat disguised tone.

"Fool!" repeated Maximilian, stung to instant rage, and his ready weapon leaped from its scabbard: "Fool! big words! thou shalt draw thinner breath anon."

The other was equally prompt. Without further preamble, the two were engaged in deadly strife: but it was soon made evident, that the aggressor, though an excellent swordsman, was no match for his more practised, or more skilful opponent. Ere Bathori, who, at the first clash, had hastened to the rescue, could come up, their bright swords had flashed across—a pass. The unknown backed a single pace; then "his poignant spear he thrust, with puissant sway," † and the nephew of the regent of Hungary, was struck to the earth. Bathori reached the spot, but the victor, under cover of the darkness, had already betaken himself to flight. The wounded man was conveyed into the nearest habitation, which happened, ("so the devil ordained") to be the humble tenement of Hubert.

Veronica, with some ceremonial of politeness, received the baron and his luckless charge, on their entrance, at the

* Obergespann,—an Hungarian title, nearly equivalent to graf.

† Spencer.

threshold. Her ears had been startled by the conflict without, and her first glance, at the disabled combatant, discovered an apology for his intrusion. Yet was there more than one reason, why the daughter of Hubert, instinctively, shrunk back, on perceiving, whom fate had ordained her guests. In Bathori, she recalled the person of the officer, who had attached her unhappy sire, and whose presence, could hardly fail to revive the affliction of the overnight: whilst the fantastic array of his bleeding companion, reminded her of the impertinent, who, on that very afternoon, had addressed her, in such indecorous terms, while traversing one of the corridors of the castle.

But, when did the claims of humanity make a vain appeal to the feeling heart of woman? The painful associations connected with the sight of the baron,—the maidenly antipathy towards the young graf, in which she might otherwise have indulged, were alike swallowed up, in the consideration, that a fellow-creature, perhaps wounded to death, required what hospitality, and aid she could render. She therefore controlled the weaker feelings of her nature, and acceded to Bathori's hurried request, for permission to bear the bleeding knight under her roof, in a kindly spirit, only qualified by the recollection of her peculiar and unprotected state, which, however, it might temper the cordiality of her compliance, did not extinguish it.

Maximilian having been laid upon the low pallet of Hubert, came to himself, and not long after, his hurt was examined by one, to whom the *ars medicandi*, or leach craft, was a privileged profession,—a youthful sister of charity,—"qui se disposoit à conserver toujours intact, le lys precieux de la virginité,*" and whose convent was at no great distance.

To the relief of Bathori, the flesh wounds of Maximi-

* Formulaire de prières des religieuses Ursulines.—*Nouvelle edition à Avignon*, 1814. A branch of this same order is established at Presburg; there is no convent of St. Ursula, at the present day in Hermanstadt.

lian were pronounced immaterial, and the application of certain vulnerary remedies, followed by quiet and repose, comprised all that was needful, to ascertain his speedy recovery. Meanwhile, such ordinary skill, in the healing art, as the cenobitical maid pretended to, she put into requisition; and managed matters so well, as to get herself established sole ministress of the sick bed-chamber. The prognostics of his gentle, and charitable nurse, were happily verified. On the morning of the third day of his confinement, the noble patient arose, and like "a needless Alexandrine," weathered the narrow passage, conducting to the front apartment of the lowly habitation; the same, where we laid the scene of an earlier manuscript.

Veronica, who had that instant returned from her customary visiting her father, modestly stood at the room door, to congratulate the invalid on his convalescence,—and, perhaps, if a painter could have chosen his minute, to catch and embody the conflicting graces of the blushing girl, that would have been it,—a figure more lovely, or more striking, than that, which she exhibited, it were hard to find. The natural timidity, which the novelty of her situation, and the native delicacy of her sex, induced, became blended with that becoming confidence, which the remembrance of the relative position of hostess and guest,—of the obliger, and the person under obligation, warranted her entertaining,—and, over all, was thrown the eloquent expression of an embarrassing consciousness, deepened by the rich glow, that her walk from the citadel never failed to spread, over the ideal translucency of her complexion. She had just laid aside her dolman, or mantle of martin skin, under which she wore, with an air of neatness and care, that was far from common, the ordinary garb of the magyar maidens. Her luxuriant locks were braided, and disposed on her head, in the form of a coronal, and it escaped not the observation of Pereny, that her rank in life did not entitle her to assume the ornamented *Pasta*, the indispen-

sable coiffure of females of gentle blood.* Her jacket was composed of the finest wool, profusely decorated with ribbons. It parted low over the *fragrant bosom*†, to show the lace front of her bodice, which was clasped or buttoned, by variously coloured glass beads, and which set off the round, and faultless symmetry of her bust, and figure. Two strings of unpolished opals, from the ancient mines of Czewernitza, shed a scintillating brightness, over the snowy circle of the neck, they hung from. The graceful tunic fitted close to the shape, until it reached the waist, where it was secured by a ribbon, in the form of a girdle; it was cut short at the shoulders, and, scarcely descending below the knees, was edged round the skirt, by a narrow sort of galloon, to correspond with the lace bordering of the Szoknyaban, whose floating linen sleeves left the moulded arm at graceful freedom. The neatly plaited kirtle, as clear from stain, as her own innocent heart, peeped, for a few inches, below the vest. Her feet were contained in boots of yellow leather, so small, you'd have said, had you seen them, they might match the fabled slippers of the classic Doricha.‡ This national costume would appear to bear no small resemblance, in respect to liberality of display, to the well-known style of our fair grandmothers, from the days of Charles, down to the middle of the last century.

If Addison were not so *indelicate* a writer, we would here quote his strictures thereon, but, as it is, we prefer referring the gentle reader to the papers of the Guardian, Nos. 100 and 109.

Our lovely hostess, having expressed her satisfaction,

* "The Pasta is composed of a number of bandages, turned round the head, and often ornamented with pearls,"—at the time of our story, none but virgins of high rank were allowed to wear it.

† Homer.

‡ An anecdote of this proverbial beauty (called Doricha by Athenæus, and Rhodopis by others), is to be met with in Strabo; it appears to be the origin of the story of Cinderella. For other particulars respecting this celebrated courtezan, consult Herodotus.

at finding her guest, in such a fair way of recovery, decorously hinted her hopes, that he would shortly make it convenient, to remove his quarters.

"During your detention here," observed the scrupulous maiden, with a blush of feminine timidity, "a perfect cure can hardly be looked for, but I trust, *ha Isten a karja*,* that tendment more meet, and other appurtenances, better fitting your condition, will, in no distant day, completely restore you."

We believe, we have mentioned, somewhere or other, that the notes of Veronica's voice, were clear and melodious ("an excellent thing in woman"), and whilst the atmosphere caught the music of her breath, and her modest irresolution, and innate grace, threw over the present association of her life, the halo of a redeeming, and tutelary power: it was no wonder, that to the entranced senses of her hearer, the very soul of oratory seemed dissolved into a spell, since, with such accompaniments, the merest prattling might have passed for eloquence.

So forcibly was Maximilian struck, that, at first, his wonted audacity failed him. He was unversed in the language of respectful love, and it was not until after some embarrassed moments, that he thankfully acknowledged the prompt hospitality afforded him, to which he declared, it was his opinion, he owed his recovery; and he ended, by requesting to be informed, in what way he could best evince the sincerity of his gratitude.—Oh! the mighty witchery of woman's charms, when consecrated by virtue and intelligence!—when the simple graces, which set them off, speak out the modesty of the mind!—What is like unto it? What can come up to its wonders? What limit its jurisdiction? It is supreme and invincible; and whilst there throbs one manly heart, attuned to the religion of nature, it will make that heart the theatre of its triumphs, and the sanctuary of its rites.

Veronica, in reply to the graf's demand, quietly ob-

* Please God.

served; "that the circumstance, of having been of any service to a fellow-creature, would reward itself, and that she cared not for other recompence."

"Oh! say not so," exclaimed Maximilian, with fervour; "I can never sufficiently testify my gratitude. To your courtesy, fair maiden, I feel persuaded it is owing, that I exist. Would that I might be allowed to consecrate the future energies of my life, to thy beauty and to thy service!"

A shade of something, not very remote from displeasure, coursed o'er the clear brow, and kindled in the cheek of Veronica. The manner and language of the graf made her wish the interview shortened, and, drawing herself up, in maidenly reserve, she coldly answered, "You must excuse me, sir stranger, if, under the peculiar circumstances, in which I am placed, with reverence be it spoken, I decline further personal communication. I need not say, I shall be glad to hear of your perfect recovery — allow me to withdraw."

Maximilian felt somewhat nettled, and did not immediately reply. Veronica passed across the room, but, ere she reached the inner doorway, the graf seized her, by the slender wrist: "Stay," he exclaimed, with the deferential air of suppliant humility, although the tones of his voice were those of superiority, and command—"stay, and listen to what I have to offer; why should you fly from one, who adores you? — why scorn a heart your invincible charms have subjected to your will? — why ——"

But here Veronica, with the native dignity of an outraged, and elevated spirit, interposed. "Unhand me, sir!" she exclaimed, whilst her heart propelled the tide of life, with violence, to her cheek. "This is to return insult for the benefit, which you would have me to believe has elicited your gratitude; I insist upon your detaining me no longer."

Maximilian met her dilating eye, while she was speaking, with a look of libertine admiration. "Adorable crea-

ture!" he replied, not heeding her remonstrance; "why not have let me perish of my wounds, rather than have preserved me, to inflict a crueller death, by those bright orbs, whose every glance is a stab—it had been better — kinder."

Veronica's respiration quickened, and her face overspread, with a still higher glow. "I cannot reply to this," she said, striving to withdraw her hand; "you take an unworthy advantage of my unprotected state. I appeal to your humanity to unloose me."

Maximilian gazed upon the maiden, the heaving of whose beautiful breast, flushed cheeks, and glistening eyes, attested the reality of her anger. "Nay," she presently added, with an air of dignity, and fixing on her audacious companion an overpowering glance — "you hurt me, sir."

Maximilian shrunk before the lustre of those eyes, heightened, and rendered irresistible, by the overflowings of an indignant heart, and, instantly loosening his hold, he threw himself at her feet. "Oh, pardon, maiden, if my fingers pressed too roughly——" he began; but Veronica, without further regarding him, silently moved away.

"Sure, ne'er before, dwelt cruelty in so sweet shaped a temple," he continued; but here he paused, for the object, unto whom he addressed himself, had already reached the door. Instantly, and abruptly he exclaimed, "Madam, your father!"

He had struck the right chord — that word was the key note to all the sympathies, hopes, and apprehensions, clinging to the heart of the maiden, who stopped short in the doorway, as if the syllables she heard, had a spell in them, to rivet her to the spot; she turned her head, and the eye of Maximilian Pereny, with lawless fixure, fed upon the most exquisite outline of her fair cheek, where her filial feelings were fast chasing the rich vermillion, which indignation had just elicited.

"What of my father?" she inquired, struggling with herself to speak with calmness.

"Come back, loveliest of human beings, and I will inform you," answered the graf.

It was not easy for Veronica to assume even the appearance of composure. Instinctively, she moved three paces nearer, where her unmannered companion knelt, and again halted; but her moistened glance was on the floor, and the immobility of the long eye-lashes, shading more than one-half of the pupil, hid from Maximilian the expression of her thoughts; her depressed countenance, however, and amiable confusion, only augmented her attractions. "Now, then," she said, with as much firmness, as she could assume, "what would you tell me respecting my father?"

"He is in prison," said Maximilian.

"Alas! I know it too well," returned the maiden; "but what is that to the purpose? — Can'st thou set him free?"

"That I can," said Maximilian, rising, and approaching nearer the anxious girl.

"Ha!" she exclaimed, looking up, and discovering features of the hue of death, "is it veritable?"

"Veritable! ay, by my knightly faith, is it," replied the other. While he spoke, he again seized the maiden by the hand, that had dropped listless by her side.

The action aroused Veronica to a renewed sense of her situation; a heightened tint spread over her brow, as if the fountains of her heart had been diverted thither from their natural channels — her eyes were fast filling with tears, as, struggling to disengage herself, she said, "This is ungenerous — loosen my hand, and I will hear all you would deliver."

"Severest of thy sex!" cried the rude voluptuary, speaking with much gesticulation, and imprinting kisses on the delicate fingers, he held in custody,—"In me you

behold the nephew of his eminence — you know not what I have in store for you. Pomp and Power, shall be your pages, and, in the gay, and eminent path, where majesty doth whirl his golden chariot-wheels, shall lackey by thy side. You shall grow mighty, beyond your dreams of grandeury. You shall feed on viands, served up with spice, more rare and fragrant than Arabian bird e'er lavished on her obsequy. Your father shall be freed, though I must e'er remain emmanacled in his place,— a bondman to your beauties. I, the future lord of all this province, to say nothing," he proceeded in a more confident tone, " of Hungary and Bohemia. I am your slave, and pledge you his freedom, on the word of a king,—a king, my angel, do you observe, that is to be,— and thou, most enchanting of thy sex! shalt divide titles with me." He released the hand of the astonished girl, and took a step or two, with conscious elevation, ere he continued, with increasing earnestness. " In requital for such benefits, *edes kintsem*,* I only ask one favour, though, therein I own is comprised a treasure, which not Plutus' white exchequer might outmatch,— nay, not the wealth of Cremnitz,† nor of all the silver mines, that will be mine hereafter — only this one return, I claim in charity."

" What is it?" said the maiden, who, as far as she might, strove to conceal that excessive agitation, which her rapidly panting boddice betrayed, in spite of her.

" Thyself! fair creature," cried the unprincipled libertine, as he threw his arms round her shrinking form, and profaned her vermillion lips, " that ne'er had been sighed on by any before," with the repeated pressure of his own.

* A phrase of endearment, signifying my treasure.

† Cremnitz; the most ancient and rich of the seven mines of Hungary. The other six are Schemnitz, Newsol, Ko nnsbergs, Bochentz, Libefen and Tiln. St. John's church, near Cremnitz, is built on the highest ground in Hungary.

On those lips he passionately clung, "like a bee, inebriated with the nectar of flowers." *

The damsel struggled in his rude embrace, and her eyes sparkled, through tears of resentment. She feebly shrieked, while the flush of blood reddened from her clear, marbly brow and cheek, even down to those chaste and vestal urns, which, like unto the "monumental alabaster," on the holy altar of St. Maria, glowed "transparent, with the colour of fire."† Like the rounded snow, drifting in, and reflecting the crimson hues of sunset, flashed, ever and anon, her bosom above the stomacher; revealing to Maximilian, by its palpitation, how deeply she felt the indignity.

"The blushing of her snowy breast,
Rendered its panting whiteness more confessed."‡

Exerting the vehement force which outraged modesty lent her, she at length disjoined herself from his embrace, and precipitately retired.

"So!" thought the young graf, "a very crystal rock of chastity, our dainty hostess; what a confounded difficulty the damoiselle raises at a salute, from our honourable mouth. By my uncle's hat! an she coy it so at the grappling of her lips, there will be rare commotions one of these first days——or nights! What a fight she'll make! Well, *nous verrons*, I must be the making of the wench, that I prognosticate. But how? Suppose I were to perform some feat, that might touch her frigid heart, and melt the Scythian Venus into my arms. We know the icicle, curdled by frost at midnight, will shiver still in the chaste moon's regard, but thaws at once into a genial flow, beneath the earliest sunbeam; and 'tis the same with the sex: the peevisher, and more immaculate the maid, the quicker she'll break through the crust of dissolving frost, or there is no truth in old saws; and here comes one will help me to kindle her prudery."

He had got thus far in his monologue, when it was

* Vathek. † See Addison on Italy. ‡ Prior.

broken by the entrance of the ancient housekeeper, Judith, who directed her masculine strides across the chamber, to the low outlet, which issued into the street. There was an oddness in her straggling gait and walk, which struck the inquisitive gaze of Maximilian with wonder. She was roughly clad: over a stomacher of leather, hung a coarse woollen garment, fastened by a slight inkle, which also served to suspend two stiff aprons of striped cloth, one before, and the other behind. Her legs were bare, almost from her knees; but round her feet were wrapped a sort of sandals, cut out of raw leather, and secured, from the instep to the calf of the leg, by reticulated thongs, a common substitute for shoes, and called *opintschen*. A string of glass beads, worn around her neck, reached so low as the girdle. She had draperied her head with a sort of turban, formed of an immense square fillet of cloth, that had once been untarnished, the folds of which, rolling loosely over her forehead and ears, even to the shoulder, almost shrouded her declining countenance. On either side this *turbant* were two or three great bosses, set with stones, and the like hung from her ears. She stooped abominably, but even so, her height considerably exceeded the ordinary stature of her sex; and the amplitude of her dimensions, in other respects, was far from common. A sort of scrip, suspended from her shoulders, completed her adjustment.

Maximilian perceived, from the first, that she was a Wallachian. "Stirring abroad, eh, good mother?" he said; but finding the old dame passed on without notice, or reply, he added, as his hand was on the latch, "Tarry awhile; whither speed you, in the fiend's name?"

"To the citadel," replied the dame, but without turning her head—"with a dish of mamalinga,* and a bottle

* Mamalinga, the food of the Wallachian peasantry, formerly made of barley, but for the last century of Indian wheat.

of mead, for Captain Hubert. Prithee, suffer me to leave you, for I am aweary till my diurnal task is done, and, at my age, I have no great vigour to spare. Yet I repine not, but rather rejoice me on my way. My father, sir knight, when alive, was of the land of the Carabogdana, * and now he is feasting on *mate* † finer than Keskemeth's. ‡ 'Tis the lot of mortality to suffer, and to be reviled, as I have been; but the next world, I doubt not, will vindicate our Lady's justice, in the evidence of her goodness—I can wait."

Maximilian gazed on the old woman in wonder. Her language seemed to him at variance with her lowly destination. "Good woman," he cried, "can it be, that I hear right? Were those words thine? Untutored, withered, and worn—to all appearance a very weed, beneath the stream of time; so sunk and rooted, in the depths of its waves, that storm or calm can matter little to thee—thou shouldst be gentle, dame. May I die ere I be crowned kiral, if my uncle could preach more to the purpose! Art not above thy show? ha, confess now?"

"Thy uncle, sir knight?"

"Ay, Cardinal Martinuzzi has that honour, old lady," returned Pereny, proudly.

"'Twas by his eminence's orders that Captain Hubert was arrested," said the ancient dame, rather in the tone of one who was laying down a proposition, for her own consideration, than as if addressing her companion.

"I should suppose so," returned Maximilian; "since the attachments for high treason are usually countersigned by the regent."

The old housekeeper, as if governed by a sudden impulse, let fall her hand from the latch of the door, and turned back some paces nearer where Maximilian was

* Land of the Carabogdana, i.e. black wheat—Wallachia; so called, because of its wretched bread.

† Mate—cakes.

‡ Keskemeth, renowned for the peculiar excellence of its bread.

stationed. "Say, wilt thou deliver a message from me to thy uncle?" she demanded.

"From thee!" exclaimed the graf, scornfully, yet with symptoms of surprise.

"Yes, sir knight; tell him — but first let me make sure, that child is out of hearing." Saying these words, the housekeeper quitted the apartment.

"This is a queer business," quoth Maximilian, when he was left alone. "I have been entertained with a most delectable tête-a-tête, truly; but the denouement is yet to come. Bah! there was more sport, looking love at my cloistered nurse, though I am as yet too weak to make it. By my troth! she does not seem one to souse her szoknyaban, after the fashion of St. Angela. * Now, for being let into the confidence of this harridan; she means something deeper, than I can fathom; her manner, methought, was mysterious; I'll hear her unfoldings, for the joke's sake. I convey a message to my uncle! ha, ha, ha! My uncle, who fancies, from Bathori's communication, that I am all this while in Hungary, spying out the disposition of the Austrian levies! Well, at all events, I must contrive to insinuate myself into the old lady's favour; for only thereby can I gain her to assist my ends on my dainty hostess yonder."

The graf's cogitations were here interrupted, by the return of the housekeeper; who, closing the door after her, paused for an instant, in the act of listening, and then advanced close to Maximilian.

"I am about to lodge in you a secret — canst thou keep it?" she asked, in tones, which her hearer thought sounded peculiarly strange and solemn.

"Undoubtedly, if I see cause," replied Maximilian.

* St. Angela, who flourished about the time of our story, appears to have been the very model of a mortifying nun: *inter alia*, her biographer says of her — "En hiver elle plongeoit sa chemise dans l'eau froide, avant de la prendre."—*Des Vertus et des Miracles de St. Angela.*

" Swear, then, sir knight, never to divulge to any, but one individual, what I am now to trust to you."

" Come, come, my good woman," said the graf, " this won't pass. Tell me, in a word, the message, you would have me deliver to my uncle, and let's have done our fooling."

" I ask you again," returned the ronion of a housekeeper — " will you swear ?"

" Any thing to oblige thee ;—I swear," replied the graf.

" 'Tis well — ha ! but heed your oath ; for if you do not——sir knight, I'll tell you a short tale. I knew a man who was once plunged, as thou art, in a tremendous vow — but he kept that ; yes, he kept that — hitherto, — hitherto. He swore, besides, never to set his foot in his native land : — this oath he violated. Assuming the disguise of a common mercenary soldier, he ventured back to Erdély ; — he showed himself, in the open, public streets, in Hermanstadt. One night — the hour was midnight — the moon hid her face — the dark clouds gathered over the earth — not a breath stole on the ear, save the hoarse booming of the bitterns in the flats, that margin the River Olt, when — you know the jagged range of rock, which fronts the citadel of Hermanstadt ?"

" Certainly," said Maximilian, impressed, in spite of himself, with strange awe, at the manner, and voice of the old dame.

" Then learn, on that same precipice, the man I mean, at the hour I mentioned, kept guard, when a *villie*, a pure and spectral bride —"

" What dost thou prate of ?" interrupted Maximilian, at the same time, involuntarily starting, — " of whom do you speak ?"

" Of whom ?—what, you remember the tale ? That sentinel then, is—was, I would say—my brother, sir knight."

" Your brother, woman !" ejaculated the graf, starting at the announcement.

" As I have told you," rejoined the female ; " and it

is from him I would thank you to bear a message, to the Cardinal Martinuzzi."

" You are raving! — 'tis many years since that man's mortal fate was sealed."

" Nevertheless, I am in possession of his secret, which I must whisper in your uncle's ear. — Say, then, to his eminence, that, on my brother Albert's being made away with, he left an account of certain transactions behind him."

" With thee ?" said Maximilian.

" No matter with whom ; — merely mention, I know the tale he had to tell, respecting the Princess Beatrice's murder and abduction, and which, but for his disappearance from his cell, on the day appointed for his examination, he would have published to all the world."

For some time, there was mutual silence, which Maximilian Pereny was the first to break. " I know not how to act in this," he returned. " What you say, touching the Princess Beatrice, demands investigation ; but, whether I ought to bear your message, I much doubt. Nevertheless, I will do so, were it only for my lost sire's interest in that transaction ; but, mark me, it is only on one condition. You must understand, my good woman," he proceeded, in a coaxing tone, on observing the old woman kept silence, " that I have taken an uncommon fancy to the exquisite arrangement of your attire."

" Ha !" exclaimed his auditor.

" Verily, I don't flatter," continued the graf; " and I purpose borrowing your dress, for a few hours, to save you the necessity of surmounting the rugged distance to the keep."

" I do not understand you," returned Judith, coldly.

" Why, this is the case," said Maximilian ; — " I mean to take your office, and so, in the most becoming guise of coiffure, kirtle and opintschen, obtain admittance to

the prison of Captain Hubert. This, dame, is my firm determination, on the word of a prince."

"And what when you get there?" inquired the housekeeper.

"That I'll tell you another time," answered Maximilian; "perhaps your master's liberation; at all events, I intend him no harm. Meanwhile, do you pouch these hongres, as an earnest of thy guerdon."

"Nay, I meant not to vend my courtesies; — they are no slaves," said the old woman, receiving in her lap, at the same time, the golden shower, apparently in that mingled spirit of prudery and gout, which, according to all accounts, inspired Danaë of old; and the strangely sorted pair, having agreed to concert their future proceedings on the morrow, the ancient dame hobbled off, with her cake and korosian, about her business.

"May I never be blessed, if there be not something very comical in all this," mused Pereny, when "left to his own aversion."* "An assignation on foot between this mysterious matron of all work, and my immaculate uncle! A sister, she would give herself out, of that poor devil of a sentry, whom Father Dominick, the saints pardon me! for so much as syllabling his name ——. By the bones of all the saints! I cannot say, I admire being mixed up in these mysteries, and now, on better consideration, I would not care, if I could slip out of the concern. Well, I will first set free this Captain Hubert, and, if such a dashing bit of service cannot, at least, secure an avenue to the heart of his daughter, I'll never more trust my skill, at that most intricate of all manly arts — the art of making love." And away Maximilian hied to his chamber, to con over all the soft things he could think of, with which to ply his pretty cloisteress, whose coming he momentarily looked for, to administer to his hurts.

* Byron.

MANUSCRIPT XI.

" Forbear! what art thou that dost rudely press
Into the confines of forsaken graves?
Hath death no privilege?"

FORD.

" Would you desire to see them exchange kisses?—Give but a little way and you shall find them at it."—FORD.

" ———————— Ædicula
Venerisque accommoda furtis."

J. DE HAUTEVILLE—*The Architrenius*, l. iv. c. 8.

WE are now to recall to our reader's recollection, that, some chapters gone by, Swartz, the keeper, made an appointment with Count Ragotzy. The brigand was punctual to the hour, and the two men met in the vestibule of the castle, at the noon of night. Count Rodna, during his occasional temporary tarriance in Hermanstadt, chose his dormitory on the top of the north turret,—a circular apartment, whose exterior masonry indicated, and circumscribed the extent of its dimensions. The walls of this narrow asylum, could hardly be said to be decorated, by the tattered arras, which had been hung around, and which disclosed, in many a gaping rent, the rough, and naked

stone-work of the old fabrick. The apartment owed but little to the hand of art, being wholly devoid of ornament, since a pallet bed, a few chairs, and a small stone table, made all the furniture. It bore, indeed, the gloomy appearance of a prison, rather than looked a place of ordinary repose. Such as it was, however, the eccentric viscount had claimed it for his "pensive citadel;"* and as Swartz and Count Ragotzy, stooped to enter the low, and narrow doorway, our hero (for as such the reader must even accept him,) was seated on his couch, sustaining before him a folio, which he was decyphering aloud, by the light, that an iron lamp contrivedly threw, on the open manuscript. The rest of the room was cast into comparative gloom. Sigismund intermitted not his voice, till the closing door awakened his attention, when he started to his feet. "I should have thought," he began, "there were many other wards and confines in this citadel, without your being billeted upon me. We are high in the air here, gentlemen, but 'tis one comfort still, we are nigher Heaven than those anointed ones, who lie in the chambers underneath me."

"Ay," said Ragotzy, in a low voice, "the nearer the skies the nearer the lightning."

"Ha! what's that you mutter?" cried Sigismund. "But the news at court, lords? Doth credit grow cheap, and traffic dear, yet?"

"The earth goes round as usual," said the keeper.

"It were well, and I could almost wish," rejoined Sigismund, "in this eternal revolution of crime and folly, one had the art of giving time, a retrograde motion, that deeds might be undone, and one, you wot of, go to Heaven,—who now,—but the age of Joshua is past, and he is your only hero, I take it, to cry 'stop' to a planet." Sigismund paused, and then fixing his penetrating eye upon Count Ragotzy, he inquired, "What fellow's this?"

* Wordsworth.

" He, whom I wish you to conduct to Hubert's dungeon," replied the keeper. " Have you the ring?"

" Behold!" replied the young viscount, upholding the required signet, " so let us proceed—I'll bring up the rear, for if I must suffer an Egyptian within dagger's-length of my person, why, I'd prefer having him under my nose, to feeling him at my shoulders."

Count Ragotzy turned fiercely to the daring youth; " How, sir?" he roared with a voice, whose vibration seemed to shake the ancient tower to its base.

Sigismund leaped to the other end of the chamber: " 'S blood! thou choleric count," he said, " do you suppose we are deaf, that you pitch your tones so high. Go to—go to.—I spoke but according to my wits, and I have been addle-pated, ever since a deed you may have heard of."

" Silence, sir!" cried the keeper, fixing the young nobleman with that stern aspect, which was wont to control his humour, even at the flood; and the stolid visage of Sigismund, immediately fell, and he merely rejoined, " Nay, I am easily persuaded."

" Seem not to mark his wanderings, good my lord," said Swartz, in the ear of Count Ragotzy, " or they will never end, and your chance of seeing Hubert to-night, will be poor indeed."

The three were preparing, to leave the chamber, in the prescribed order, when Ragotzy's eye happened to glance over the title page of the folio, that Sigismund had been studying, previous to their entrance. The book was the Bible. The Cygani chief turned away, and his looks expressed some surprise.

" You see, sir," cried Sigismund, " that were I not distraught, I am anathema; but only sane folks are presumed to exhale the infectious breath of heresy, over the chastity of the Gospel; and so I read my Bible, and say my prayers, as God bade me, without standing in fear of

pains and penalties.—Madman! Now, to my thinking, he that may sit in a calm valley, and yet chooses to repose on the Carpathians, is your true madman. Now-a-days', only fools retain their senses. But walk forwards, sir Cygani. I attend you."

The three men quitting the round chamber, descended the narrow spiral stairs, to the basement floor. Swartz led the way, and the light of a torch, which he carried, threw a fitful glare along the winding corridors, and down the flights of steps, which successively, and for a considerable time, without a word, they traversed; at length, the party arrived at a small iron door, hidden from casual observation, among the profuse ornaments of gothic architecture. Sigismund pressed a spring, and the door flew open. Swartz stopped short. "Wherefore not go, by the way of Father Dominick's apartments?" he demanded, "'twere the shorter route."

"Ay, and the more dangerous," returned the other; and the momentary gloom, that wrapt his features, partially concealed the peculiar, and almost scornful look, that accompanied the words. "But why jar we here?" he presently added, "either take the road, I'd have ye, or return as you came: hand me the torch, and be still."

Thus seasonably reminded of his infirmity, the two followed the unhappy youth, without further objection.

Count Ragotzy could, with difficulty, conceal his amazement, on finding Count Rodna as *au fait* as himself, at descending and ascending steps alternately, and threading the labyrinth of vaults and chambers, through which, often turning at short angles, they had to steer their course.—"Ibant solâ sub nocte per umbram."

It would have been a startling study, could any one have read the inward thoughts of those men, whom chance, or fate, or mightier Providence, had thus thrown together, and who now, in the depth, and darkness of night, in

silence and solitude, pierce the entrails of the earth, and rest opposite to each other, in an unwholesome vault of irregular form, and dubious dimensions. But more dubious, and wilder than the dungeon's gloom, and, perchance, as dark and inscrutable, were the recesses of Ragotzy's bosom, and those of his companions. The caustic, and mad Sigismund,—the saturnine, and wily Swartz,—the impetuous, and vindictive Alaric Polgar.

What cement could unite characters, so discordant, in mysterious combination? It was the free-masonry of a common peril—the overruling passion, signified by the little cabalistic word — REVENGE! revenge! and on whom? Wherefore? On HIM! on Father Dominick—but not on like grounds; nor might the Cygani leader form the remotest guess, how the interests of the monk ever came to clash, with those of Swartz, and his lunatic charge. But to our tale.

The party shortly stood before an ancient portal, ornamented with the usual rude adjuncts, and columnar carvings, incident to the gothic style of architecture. Sigismund, by the aid of a key, having thrown open the valves, the three pressed into a small chamber, in one corner of which was a niche, containing a statue of the Virgin. A cross and altar stood in an opposite recess; between these, was extended, on the floor, a rough mattress, the sole appearance of accommodation, the apartment presented. Near the paillasse lay a discipline or rod, formed of wire and cord, a sort of scourge, with which, in the act of corporal mortification, Roman Catholics are accustomed to lash their persons. Fronting them, as they entered, was a small door-way, curtained by black serge. Sigismund, depositing the torch, by the side of the altar, softly raised the curtain, and having crept under, he was followed by his companions. They found themselves in a small oratory, or subordinate chapel of the cathedral church of St. Theresa. The few votive luminaries that, here and there, reflected a gloomy

religious light athwart the aisles, were hardly sufficient to dissipate the shadows, that hung beneath the groined arches of the roof. These connected the slender-clustered columns from either side of the hallowed edifice, and were carved in the richest tone of gothic architecture.

"By the holy rood above us!" said Sigismund, in a low whisper, "we must be wary." Favoured by an oaken palisade, or screen, which partitioned off the chapel, our three adventurers might observe what was going on, without themselves being liable to discovery. Presently, two persons walked with slow, and measured tread, from the south transept, along the middle aisle. One was a young chevalier, most elegantly habited, and the other was immediately recognised for Scipio, the sable follower of Father Dominick. These men seemed engaged in earnest colloquy, but the drift of their discourse, owing to the under-key, in which they spoke, might not be gathered, excepting when, once, halting, near our wanderers for a moment, ere they turned, the following words from the lips of the African, fell distinct on the ear:—"Only do you obtain her heart," he said; "and, by all that is consecrate to Heaven, beneath this holy fane, I promise you her hand." Scipio soon after left the church, through a small postern at the upper end of the aisle. Ragotzy, from whatever motive, perhaps by involuntary impulse, made a motion, as if he would have rushed through the church after him; but probably the recollection of the urgency of the business, he was upon, altered his first intentions. Scipio's comrade remained, and paced backwards and forwards, with folded arms, and eyes, fixed upon the marble pavement, and the breathing of a deep-drawn sigh, swelled, at intervals, along the fretted vaultings of the roof, which echoed his agitated footstep.

"'Tis Marc Antoine Ferraro, the secretary of the ambassador of Austria," observed Swartz, in a low tone;

" what makes him hither? and what was't, in the name of wonder, that that familiar of evil, was muttering to him?"

" Are we to go forwards,—or to remain in this spot for ever?" impatiently broke in the Cygani capitany;* " I must see Hubert. Let's extinguish yon silken son of dalliance, with a blow!—what does he there? For my my part, I'll wait no longer," and the bandit fiercely drawing forth his dagger, was about to rush upon the unconscious object of his wrath, when Sigismund held him back.

" Methinks, your valiancy is the madder of us twain," he said, grasping his arm; " and would carry the permission, which fellows of thy stamp have, by institute and temper, to look frightful, rather too far!†—Not now! not now!"

" Ha! wouldst cross my tiger spring?" hotly demanded Ragotzy.

" Hush thee! my hero," cried Sigismund; " speak low, my king of gipsies."

" Let go my sword-arm!" exclaimed Ragotzy; " ten thousand furies!—do you hear?"

" Ay, to be sure," returned Sigismund; " and so would yon peripatetic, were he not deaf."

Swartz now hastened to interfere. " My lord," he said, addressing the enraged brigand; " be guided by me; and, would you speak with Hubert to-night, remain in silence where you stand:—and you, Sigismund, loose your hold on the count." Sigismund turned round to speak; but after a moment's consideration, appeared to quail beneath the fixed look, and energetic action of his keeper; while Ragotzy, his arm being free, played convulsively with

* Capitany,—chieftain.

† " Qu'il (Pelisson) abusoit de la permission qu'ont les hommes d'etre laids."—*Mad. de Sevigny.*

the head of his dagger, at the same time darting, upon the twain, a glance of fiery hatred. Like the fiend huntsman of Boccaccio, he glowed indignant—

> " Frustrate of his will,
> Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill."

Sigismund encountered the sudden glare from that dark-fringed lid, whose sinister meaning he was not slow at interpreting, with a steady aspect; whilst an equivocal smile, that faintly struggled about the nether lip, tended to redeem the severity of a contour, the most inexpressibly dignified, and commanding, that nature ever wrought, in her happiest mood.

Meanwhile, the object of all this commotion intermitted not his pensive, and solitary walk. His deep and frequent sighs, inhaled large draughts of the heavy air, to cool the throbbing heart, surcharged with its unslaking fires. Presently, he halted opposite a side altar, dedicated to the Virgin.

" Maid and mother!" he exclaimed, in the audible tones of a voice, of exquisite richness and compass ; " celestial or terrene, or whatsoever thou art, or where,—whose blessed name is based upon this shrine! Hear my votive prayer! and if, indeed, the being of my mundane adoration"—his invocation here came to an abrupt close, owing to a female figure, enveloped, from head to foot, in a capacious robe of crimson velvet, suddenly emerging out of the dark, and advancing direct up to the spot, where the young chevalier was stationed.

" Ferraro!" she murmured in the low, and plaintive accents of affection. The other started,—he gazed vacantly upon the splendid form before him, but preserved silence. " Methinks, thy looks afford but a cold welcome; nay, am I infectious, that you start as frighted, when I cross you? What wert thou conjuring? I caught

the thrilling pathos of that voice, but not the words. What did'st thou muse on, was it love, or grief?"

"On both," said Ferraro, and he suspired with convulsive force. "Grief, the sedentary suicide," he added, "is a miser, who loves to dig up, and count over the items, that make up her sum of wretchedness, and gaze, in secret, on her stores."

"Ay," replied the female, "grief may, but not love."

"They are twins," said Ferraro.

"Alas! I have reason to know it," returned the female.

"Twins, madam," repeated the chevalier; "and there's an avarice in Love, no less than in Grief."

"Surely I might share your hoard in either," said his companion. "Nay, prithee, Antoine, be not so greedy of your treasured woe, as not to admit me partner."

"I should know that voice," whispered Sigismund, to Swartz.

"Hist!" returned his keeper.

"What dismal noise was that? did you not hear a stir?" inquired the female.

"'Twas Death's, then," said Ferraro. "In such an hour as this, they say, he broods upon the still vapours of the night, or roams abroad upon his startling wing."

"Let us hence — I shake to hear you; thy words are strange; there is an unnatural sternness in thy manner; I cannot see thy glance! The rack of heaven flies past the sickly moon; — I cannot, I say, see thy glance, but I can *feel* it. Let us hence, my love — thou art ill to-night."

"Oh God!" exclaimed Ferraro.

"Why wilt enrich the night-air with thy sighs?" rejoined the lady; "can I avail? — tell me the cause of woe?"

"Thou art the cause."

"I, Antoine! — I?" replied the lady, leaning, in the very abasement of love, upon his shoulder. "Nay nay,

thou speak'st at random. Let us leave this dreary edifice, and hie us, where I may gather thee under my wings, and suck thy secret from thee." Ferraro leant in silence, against the iron screen of the holy shrine. "Hark!" resumed the lady, after a pause, "how yon desolate bird screams at the gushing wind."

"Desolate, call you him?" said Ferraro; "now, I envy him."

"How so?" returned the other.

"He is alone, as I would be — Good night."

On saying these words, the chevalier tore himself from the lady's clinging arms, and rushed out of the church. For a moment, his fair companion remained as one petrified, and then, with wild abandonment of mien, she sprang after him, exclaiming, "Nay, another word, my Antoine!"

The Cygani, and his companions, immediately emerged from their lurking-place.—By a kind of silent compact, no remark escaped from either, relative to the extraordinary scene, which we have just detailed. Whatever was the reason, though the effect appeared single and simultaneous, they confined their sentiments, in regard to it, to their own bosoms; but, true mirrors to each other's apprehension, either might behold, in the expression of his companion's countenance, the contagious reflex of his own inward cogitation. The lady was one, whom neither of them expected to encounter in that place, and under such circumstances; and their common silence, was the evidence of a common sentiment, and evinced any thing, rather than indifference. A cast of reflection forthwith shadowed the physiognomy of these midnight wanderers, — deepening the lines of Swartz's sardonic visage, — tempering the fire of Ragotzy's dark eye,—and sicklying o'er the hectic flush of Sigismund, with an insidious hue of pallidness. Each looked as scared, as he had seen Medusa's head; but other business was

now on hand, and the future had hours enough in store, for reverie, and idle marvelling.

Sigismund, having retaken possession of the torch, passed behind the altar, where Ferraro had begun his orisons. Upon pressing a spring, a secret door, in the side of the wall, revolved on its hinges. It opened on an inclined plane, which our adventurers traversed for some time. At length, on their leader turning an abrupt angle, they stood opposite to several ascending stairs, hewn out of the rock. Having surmounted these, Sigismund found his further progress impeded, by a small wooden door, constructed in the roof of the vault, which, upon his applying some means of forcible pressure, flew open. Having passed through, he held the torch, whose flickering light struggled, with the subterranean vapours, over the narrow aperture, to illuminate his companions' obscure ascension. They emerged, through a marble slab, erected in the midst of a sepulchral ossuary, or catacomb, containing numerous effigies and tombs: whilst, on every side, fantastic pyramids of human bones were piled, and full-length skeletons rose, on the startled sight.

They were standing in the same subterranean crypt, whither the sentry had been allured, by the *villie* of the precipice, as narrated in an early MS. There they paused to take breath. Across this place, which showed, in the dim light, like the infernal shades, forms, undefined, and therefore horrible, blending, as it were, the peculiar associations of divided worlds, were flitting in multitudes. One tall skeleton rested behind the trio, as if participating their mute, and common councils. Other ossuous figures preserved their respective distances, as the stern and unhallowed witnesses of what was enacting. Ever and anon, as the flickering light would momentarily expire, shapes more shy, and swifter than the evanescent sparkles of the torch, shot athwart the gloom

of the populous sepulchre, whilst the relics of humanity around, would appear to make dumb signs, and gestures, in the " dim suffusion" of night. In those regions, seemed to hover the unhappy ghosts, about their mortal remains, holding mysterious, and supernatural intelligence, in voices, which were no longer of the upper earth.

A commotion, as of another world, disturbed that ghostly prison-house. The dead appeared to be stirred, aroused, as it were, from their sleep of years or centuries, and a breathless, heavy sense of injury, of outrage, of the violation of the grave, seemed impressed on those dreadful habitants. Perhaps, some dim, obscure whisperings, of the sort, crept, like a night-charm, from beings they saw not, over the hearts of the intruders; for the inner spirit, still imprisoned in the clay, seemed to shudder, at its mysterious intelligence. Count Ragotzy suddenly made a motion to press forwards. " Let's quit these gloomy precincts," said he, " they have turned all air to earth in me."

" Nathless," replied Sigismund, " we may surely draw the breath of life, for a few minutes, in these damp cloisters, whose atmosphere must, one day, be common to us all, till time shall be no more."

The voices sounded hoarsely, like a muffled bell, in the substantial vapours of the vault, and the living utterance was succeeded, by a deep, a long, and almost breathless silence. On a sudden, there ensued a strange tempest, and heaving of the air, visionary forms made their presence felt; discourse, but incognizable to any sense of humanity, was going on, and a chill sensation, instinct with fear, clung, like an incubus, upon the hearts of our three adventurers.

After listening profoundly, for a minute, they simultaneously started up, with the purpose of leaving the sepulchre. Sigismund waved the torch on high, to brighten its decaying powers, and its flash fell, upon

the hideous objects around, which seemed to grow gigantic, within the sphere of the fleeting radiance.

A low, indistinct hum, as of a decaying breeze, became audible, in the direction of a magnificent cenotaph, erected at the further end of the vault. It echoed, like the unsubstantial and mysterious whisperings of the reproving shades;— again, they paused involuntarily,— they recoiled. Can it be, that yon gaunt skeleton, is now in the act of flitting across the stony pavement? No, surely, the eyes of Ragotzy must have deceived him; — and yet—again!—

The light, which Count Rodna held, waxed dim and dimmer. There certainly arose some indescribable movement, in that shadowy solitude. The stirrings around them; those sounds, swelling and falling, like the dirges of the wind, could be liable to no mistake,—they can be no illusion of the nerves. What is it, now glided about these revolting remnants of mortality? Ha! suddenly, and with violence, the torch, that Sigismund held, was dashed upon the ground, and all things became immersed in the wonted impenetrable darkness of the sepulchre. It was the affair of an instant. Of the three, only Ragotzy was armed.

"How, my lord, has this happened?" asked Swartz, in a faint voice, addressing Sigismund.

"Here, Swartz, where do you stand?" replied the other; "reach forth your hand:—that's well: and hark ye, speak low, for, by the powers of darkness, the devil is at my elbow!"

"Nay, consider, my lord, this is no time—"

"No time!" interrupted Sigismund, whom the unquiet spirit of his malady seemed anew to visit, perhaps because the darkness did not permit him to see, that there was, distinctly, a shade of displeasure, on the brow of the keeper. "You err egregiously. Now what said King Bela, so blithe and gay, when his ranks were

scattered, and merry men flown? *Talpra vitez!* * Let's hold on our way: and, *donnons!* the day's our own!"

"For Heaven's sake, my good lord," implored Swartz, "be on your guard, or thou art lost."

"Nay, I am not so mad," returned the youth, "but I have wit enough, to keep my head on my shoulders."

"Sigismund, we are probably in the hands of enemies," rejoined the keeper; "and, however you may reck nought for your life, remember, the destinies of Hungaria are at stake."

"The destinies of Hungaria, Swartz! Now that passes;—I, a crack-brained boy of twenty, and thou a keeper, madder yet than oneself;—I would I'd light enough to laugh, 'twere a rare jest! the destinies of Hungaria, forsooth! the destinies of a fool's cap, you mean!"

"What am I to believe, my lord?" said Swartz.

"Believe, man," replied Sigismund, with some asperity, "have I not told you? Believe! why that thou art blinder than the mole!"—then, resuming his wonted flippant tone, he added, "for he, ye ken, can see in the dark, and work his way to heaven's blessed light,..in *silence!*"

Sigismund spoke the last word with significant emphasis, grasping, at the same time, the arm of the keeper impressively, with his hand. "But, hark ye, Swartz!" he presently resumed: "that amiable young Cygani, though somewhat fiery withal, who favoured us with his protection so far; peradventure, the consuming dart of death hath melted his body into mist! since he is no more palpable!"

"Count Ragotzy," whispered Swartz, "speak:" but Ragotzy vouchsafed no response. Swartz hailed him louder, still there was silence; and whether the man, he

* On, warriors!

called upon, yet tarried in the sepulchre, or had been borne from thence, by some strange agency, remained a doubt.

"He must be dead," said Sigismund, with an involuntary shudder, which was succeeded by a start, when a voice from behind replied:

"No, he lives, but ye—!"

Both turned round; and the hollow and sepulchral voice, whose tones might well have issued, as they seemed to do, from one of the spectral things, within a few paces of where the wanderers stood, thus breathed in their ears:—

"Mortals!" it murmured, with horrible distinctness of articulation, "what seek ye here? Why, in the secret hour, do ye, still encumbered with the slough of humanity, molest the repose of the peaceful dead? Why, where the old king lies embalmed, and festering in his cerements, dost thou intrude? Thou!" and Sigismund felt a thrilling pressure on his shoulder: "outcast and changling!—thou of all men living!"

"Ha! what dost hint at?" cried Sigismund: "Who art thou? Mysterious spirit! I beseech thee, answer me!"

"List not to that voice, my lord," expostulated Swartz; "list not, for the sake of the cause to which you are consecrated, by every motive human and divine! List not, lest—"

"Swartz!" interrupted Sigismund, in a tone of impetuous passion, "hold off your hands, sir; my fate calls out;—I will be heard; I will be answered. Men have gone mad in earnest, ere now, of less, than the bewildered, desperate thoughts, which blaze within, and throe my very vitals,—daily, nightly, hourly. I have gleaned much—I apprehend more. I would be informed of all—and will." He paused, but presently burst out, with uncontrollable earnestness, and emotion: "By the bones of my buried ancestry! which the spirit, that

swells, and soars within this breast, tells me, once ministered to the volition of mighty souls, whom yet I know not, I adjure thee! solve the riddle of my fate, and let the images of the past stretch their shadows, over futurity!"

"*Child of mystery!*" replied the voice, "*thou must await, in patience, the unravelling of the intricate ways of the lofty, and the proud;—when the confidence of the wicked shall be violated, when his trust shall fail, and he be confounded with shame; when the prey of the mighty one shall be retaken, and the spoil, seized by the terrible, shall be rescued; when the signet be broken, and the scriptures published, along the causeways of Transylvania,—then shall thy right and thy might, meet in the tabernacle of thy father! Meantime, as heretofore, the vials of thy fate are filled with blood, and wrath, and subterfuge!* Yet say, wouldst thou behold thy sire?"

"My sire!" repeated Sigismund, "ay, though motes of elemental fire blasted my eye-balls, at the vision, to blind me for the measure of my life to come. My sire! He—who? Show me!"

"Give me thy hand, and the revealing tomb shall answer thee!" returned the solemn voice, whilst long, bony fingers, dank and clammy, as those of death, grasped the extended hand of Sigismund. Then a few steps they measured, in the solid darkness of that vault.

"My lord, thou art too rash," interposed Swartz, in an eager tone of remonstrance: "Wouldst rip thy father's marble, and call his reverend ghost, to affright my dreams? The time is not yet ripe:—thou shalt not go with her."

"Shalt not!" repeated Sigismund.

"I have your father's word for it," urged the keeper: "my charge of thee, was the legacy he mingled with

his dying prayers. She is thy bitterest foe—thy father's foe, and his—"

"Ha! ha! ha!" interrupted the frightful voice.

"If thou respect thy future peace," cried Swartz, but his appeal was drowned in horrid laughter.

The next minute all was still, and it was not without something like alarm, that Swartz felt himself deserted,.. the only living thing, in that dreadful sepulchre.

MANUSCRIPT XII.

"Sacer inest in nobis spiritus bonorum malorumque custos et observator et quemadmodum nos illum tractamus ita et ille nos."

SENECA.

We have now to revert to that fatal dawn, which introduced Vicchy to our reader.

It will be remembered, with what anguish he left his senseless child, in the arms of Judith, while, almost overcome with the scorpion reflex of his contemplations, he was guarded to the citadel. Having traversed a long, dark passage, he descended a flight of steps, terminated, by a massive postern, which, being with difficulty unbarred, disclosed to him his prison; the lamp his conductor held, threw forth just so much light across, as served to exhibit the desolation of the place,—there was a chill of damp and mould about the walls, which were of great thickness.

"'Tis many years since any soul has been here confined," said the man, whose office several enormous keys, hanging from his leathern jerkin, sufficiently denoted. He spoke in a gruff, but not unpleasant tone. "That door has not creaked on its hinges, since I have held office; I made a vow never to turn a key upon a prisoner in this cell; but conspirators are rife, in these latter

days, and every other nook and cranny, being disposed of, or bespoken, the Virgin must e'en wink at my perjury."

To the astonishment of the warder, there was still no response; he lit the lamp, hanging from the centre of the roof, but, again hesitating, he said, somewhat abruptly, "I would not wish to alarm you, captain, but don't you now scent an oddish sort of something in the atmosphere, as if it were impregnated with brimstone, and sulphur, and such like diabolical effluvia?"

"The air is close, doubtless," replied Hubert, hardly heeding him.

"I dare say so," returned the warder, in a singular, and mystic tone, "'twere strange an' it be not."

Again, he appeared on the point of withdrawing, when, as if impelled, by some irresistible feeling, he turned back from the door, and, coming close up to Vicchy, tapped him on the shoulder, with a species of partisan, which he carried about him, saying, at the same time, in a mysterious half whisper, "Now, who do you imagine last tenanted this dungeon?"

"Any person of consequence?" returned Vicchy, startled out of his abstraction, not less, by the pertinacity of the man's address, than the peculiarity of his manner.

"No," answered the jailor; "but that poor haunted body, (may the saints have his soul in their keeping at this hour!) to whom —" and he placed his mouth close to the ear of Vicchy, "to whom the *villie*-spectre appeared, while keeping guard on the precipice."

"Indeed!" cried the other, whom the mention of that "doomed spot," appeared to interest.

"'Tis really the case," continued the keeper of the prison; "and that same night, he lodged here, as you must have heard, he was whisked away by the devil, or his minister upon earth. You know whom I mean, I'll be bound, without my being more particular — ahem; the Lord help us! but, good morning — I must look to

my charges; you will not see any sight to care for, till night-fall, those gentry seldom walk after matins, so don't be frightened;" and, with this cheering recommendation, his loquacious guardian left his prisoner.

Could any thing extraneous have roused the unhappy man out of his despondency, the information just given him by the warder, would have possessed that power: naturally predisposed to a little superstition, he might have looked forward to the coming night with no very comfortable sensations; but neither terror nor curiosity availed, to distract the train of thoughts, that pressed on him on every side, and those contemplations were "of Cerberus and blackest midnight born." If undeserved calamity be often difficult of endurance, how truly forlorn must be his reflections, in the utter wreck of whose every earthly hope is a "self-incurred" affliction. * Vicchy felt, he was only tasting of the bitter thorns of that tree, himself had planted, and deemed, too late, he "should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed." The passion of remorse is, commonly, so tenacious of its object, that, if ever it be allowed a purchase upon the human mind, it is no easy matter making it loosen its hold. We may go on pleasantly enough, so long as "we trust we have a good conscience;" but the man that doubts, in the least, may as well, at once, set about a régimen of penance, or repentance, *secundum artem*.

There prevails, among certain shallow people, a notion, (the fallacy of which, by a strange oversight, on the part of our spiritual teachers, has never been sufficiently exposed), that sin, however it may turn out with the next life, is sometimes permitted to evade its natural punishment in this. Now such a narrow persuasion, really, seems to us, to have been taken up, on most unsatisfac-

* ——— τῶν δὲ πημονῶν
μαλιστα λυποῦς αἳ φανῶς ἀνθαίρετοι.—ΟΙΔ. TYP.

tory evidence, our breasts, not being glassed to the inspection of one another. The world judges only (as it can judge), by outward appearance, and determinate success; but a man's peace of mind, (for, be it remembered, that the true constituents of happiness are a matter of internal sensation,) is an affair, of which the individual himself is invariably the best judge, though, perhaps, not always the most faithful chronicler, and, as the stoic * well observes, his happiness, or misery, depends on the freedom, and use of his own will, and can bear small relation to those terrestrial appurtenances those "complemental and circumstantial pieces of felicity," as Sir Thomas Browne † calls them, which are the mere adjuncts and "external accidents," of our common nature.

> "Non possidentem multa vocaveris
> Recte beatum."‡

"Whatever," says Burlamaqui, "is contrary to the light of reason and conscience, cannot, in any condition of life, but be accompanied with a secret disapprobation of mind, and afford us vexation and shame."§ In fine, as Lord Shaftesbury clearly demonstrates, "It is Virtue, by which alone man can be happy, and *without which he must be miserable.*" ‖ It is, however, certain, that nothing sooner opens the mental eye to the enormity of crime, than the reaping that direct retribution in the face of the world, which, covertly or openly, ever follows in the trail of guilt, and which will inevitably, sooner or later, overtake its quarry. Now Vicchy's soul felt, for all the world, as if the Erinnys' whips and angers were

* The Stoic; see Epictetus, or rather Simplicius's Commentary, 638. See also Isocrates, Orat. de Permut.

† Religio Medici.

‡ Horace.

§ "Principles of Natural Law," c. 12. v.

‖ Characteristics, vol. 1. p. 176.

being spent only on him. He found the issue of all his fine schemes in imprisonment, and impending death, himself having to meet his fate on the scaffold, leaving his fair daughter exposed, without a shield, to "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." When once this latter apprehension stood, bare and hideous, before his mental vision, it palsied the beatings of his heart; and, as the minutest particles of morbifick matter, received into the system, harbingers all the horrors of plague or pestilence, so, the mere cursory thought of Veronica's destitution, had no sooner glanced across his mind, than it continued to ferment, till, by its fatal quality, it induced a species of mental aberration, bordering on despair. He threw himself wildly on his wretched mattrass, and let hour after hour flit by him, without even a change of position. When, on the following evening, Veronica entered the wretched apartment, she found her father stretched at his length, upon the ground. The countenance, he exhibited, was pale and haggard; his eyes bloodshot, and his hair dishevelled. She sprung forward to embrace him, but could extort no return to her innocent endearments, save groans, and sighs, and ejaculations, expressive of the extremity of his despair. Veronica applied herself to assuage his sorrow, but it was long ere she succeeded, in restoring him to composure.

When, however, at length, Vicchy came to understand, that the monotonous round of his prison-house was permitted to be relieved, by the soothings of filial attention—when he heard, from the lips of Veronica, the not unfriendly message, which Martinuzzi had transmitted—he started from the earth, with a wild and astonished air, and, falling upon his daughter's neck, they mingled their tears together. The voice of the maiden, and her intelligence, combined to act upon his heart, like falling dew upon a parched soil. "Son air doux est pour le cœur, ce

que la rosée du soir est pour les terres sèches et arides."* His spirit appeared to rebound, and he bade her good night, when the regulations of the prison compelled his daughter's departure, in a frame of mind, much more calm and resigned than, after having witnessed his despair on her entrance, she could have hoped for. For herself, she could only weep her adieus; postponing, until the morrow, the communication of a matter, which alarmed her beyond measure.

It was only just before she repaired to the citadel, that, on entering the room in which she was originally introduced to the reader, the maiden's eye happened to glance where a folded paper, in the form of a letter, lay near the fire-place. Taking it up, she unconsciously caught the superscription. She started—it was addressed to the regent of Hungary. Supposing (which, indeed, was the fact) that it must have been overlooked by her father, in his agitation, while gathering up the several papers the night before, Veronica, with the intention of again inclosing the paper, in the common envelope, raised the window-seat. This was accomplished, by the pressure of a secret spring, a species of security, which was general enough in those days, although the contrivance of every particular mechanism might not be readily discovered. What was the confusion and astonishment of Veronica, on peering into the cavity of the window-seat, to find that the packet, which had been there deposited, was gone! Whither had it vanished, and by whom was it purloined? She explored every nook, a second, and a third time, in vain. But, however inexplicable this events, he had then no time to waste, in horror or amazement.

On her renewing her visit to Vicchy's prison, she perceived, that the tone of her father's mind had, in a great measure, recovered its elasticity; and so she thought it

* Massillon, 4eme Petit Carême.

right, no longer to delay acquainting him, with the occurrence, we have just related. Ere she had uttered three words, forebodings of the truth rushed across Vicchy's mind, and the traces of his emotion darkened his countenance.

"So, girl," he exclaimed, when she had done, "the prefigured object of my life, which I thought was about to be embodied, and attained, has eluded my hopes. Dost not grieve," he proceeded, in a tone, trembling with emotion, "for thy folly, in not having read and sifted the pith, and circumstance, of every tittle contained within that packet? Had you but done so!—the opportunity was then ours; we had the cards in our own hands, and now, by heaven's queen, the idea is wildfire!—(and in his sudden rage, he violently struck his forehead.) But you say," he added more calmly, "you have yet one of these reprieves of destiny, mighty to save; if so, give it me. Where is it?"

Veronica, dreading a renewed discussion upon a subject, the revival of which she felt anxious, if possible, to avoid, did not immediately reply.

"Perverse and paltering girl! do my bidding," rejoined Vicchy, reddening with anger.

Veronica reached forth the fatal paper, which Vicchy, having received, tore open, and bade her read the contents aloud.

"I would to Heaven, my dearest father," answered Veronica, "that it were in my power to obey you; but—"

Here Vicchy passionately broke in upon her speech, and renewed his instances, to win his daughter to compliance.

It were little better than a dry recapitulation of a former chapter, were we to transfer to our pages, the demands and the evasions, which followed. It will be sufficient to observe, that, after plying every weapon, that the arsenal of threats and persuasions could furnish, the

baffled parent was fain to give over the attack, on her integrity; for the like cause that, but for the lucky accident of a flag of truce, must have shortly compelled Lord Exmouth, to desist from the bombardment of Algiers, namely, a want of ammunition. All Vicchy's pleading recoiled, before the steady sense of Veronica, like a wave from a rock; so that, at length, his oratory naturally enough slackened fire, and his daughter shortly changed the discourse, by mentioning the accident, which had introduced Maximilian beneath their roof.

"What is this?" inquired Vicchy, starting up aghast. "Who, say you, was wounded?"

"One, apparently, too powerful to be offended," answered Veronica. "But first I ought to inform you, that last evening the vizor'd foreigner, the same, who, more than once, a year or two ago, visited you, has been at our abode."

"Ha! I might have foreseen it. Why have you kept this back all the while?" hastily and peremptorily questioned Vicchy. "Well, and what did he say? By the rood! thou must have lost thy wits, simpleton—what art silent for?"

"He required of me to give him the packet," said Veronica.

"And you told him," cried her father, "that—"

"I told him the truth, sir," said Veronica, calmly.

"And then"—interrupted Vicchy.

"Oh! my dear father, he cursed me!"

"Cursed thee!—Cursed my Veronica!" exclaimed Vicchy, in smothered and bitter accents. "The villain!"

"And otherwise used such terms," continued the maiden—"it makes me, even now, shake to recall them."

"You did not, by any chance, let out, the packet had been opened?" said Vicchy, eagerly.

"No, I simply gave him to understand, it was gone; and then, in a voice of deadly ire, he demanded a certain

valuable BOX, which, he declared, he consigned to your care, at the same time with the packet; and on my assuring him I knew nought of it, he stamped, and — but I will not tell you; only, there is something in that man, from which my instinct revolts, as at a snake, at once venomous and loathsome."

There ensued a long pause.

"And what of him, the wounded man you spake about?" presently demanded Vicchy.

"He in the mask had not left many minutes," answered Veronica; "when voices, high in argument, followed by the clashing of swords, arose from the street; the sounds of the affray, however, suddenly ceased. I was still listening in terror, when the wounded chevalier was borne, in the arms of his friends, beneath our roof."

"But you did not receive them?" demanded Vicchy, turning round upon her with a countenance, which expressed a feeling of angry, and distressed surprise.

"What choice had I?" inquired Veronica, in turn. "I saw he was bleeding, perchance, to death."

"'Tis another link in the adamantine chain of destiny," ejaculated Vicchy. "What on earth have we to do to harbour strangers?" He said no more, but traversed his dungeon floor for some time, with an impatient pace. He had not yet composed his irritable mood, when his eye lit upon several sentences, traced in chalk, on the walls of the prison. Having unhooked the lamp, he proceeded, to throw the light upon the writing.—"What have we here?" said Vicchy; "perhaps, if no nice moral difficulty suggest itself to your delicate conscience," he proceeded, with sarcastic bitterness, "you will deign to read these lines; however, I must beg, if you entertain any scruple, that you will not at all strain a point, for the sake of obliging a foolish imprisoned father." Veronica could scarcely restrain her tears, but she made no reply. "Well, how is it to be?" resumed Vicchy, sharply; "is it not your notion, that we are as free to read what's here

written, as he, who may inhabit this wretched cell, when I shall be a headless trunk. Trust me, he'll not wait to refine upon the propriety, but will peruse it, if it suits him; that is, if the misery of his lot be not too mighty, to admit of momentary forgetfulness. Pshaw! pshaw!—dry your tears, and begin." The weeping girl did her best to obey, and to the inexpressible astonishment of both, at its contents, slowly deciphered, and repeated the inscription, which ran as follows:—

"I write this, that my fate may be made known to my friends. I was looked on by the evil eye, in my infancy, and my subsequent life has been a long mistake.* At nine years of age, piqued by my father's refusal to create me a count,† at the same time with my brother, and allured by some Wallachians in our neighbourhood, I was induced to fly from Temeswar, of which city my sire was prefect, with a tribe of that nation. With these free bands I consorted for several years. It was I, who, bribed by one, whose name I am yet ignorant of, at the head of a small party, bore the Princess Beatrice, from the escort of the graf, Pereny. The princess was pierced by an arrow, during the melée, and I was told by the man, who, I believe, himself did the deed (the same who first hired my services, and who afterwards bound me with an oath, never to return to Transylvania), that she was mortally wounded. Years rolled on in exile, till made aware, from experience, of the truth of our country's adage‡, I resolved to return, and enlist in the new levies of Martinuzzi. Would now to God, I had not done so!—I was allured from my post, by the spectre of the murdered Beatrice, who appeared to me, in the shape *of*

* Alluding to a common Hungarian superstition.

† The Prefect of Temeswar, as well as the Waivode of Transylvania, and the Palatine of Hungary, possessed, at the era of our story, the privilege of ennobling their children.

‡ Extra Ungariium, non est vita, si est vita, non est ita.

a villie, the princess's marriage having been unconsummated at her death. She drew me to follow her to the subterranean haunts of Hermanstadt: I there beheld the man, who first tempted me to the abduction of the princess. Twice since, I have caught his bright eye fixed upon me,—and I feel, yes I feel, I am in the boa's toils. To-morrow, I have to appear before the lord cardinal; but, however his eminence may determine respecting me, I have a conviction, that my mortal career draws towards its close. Ha! a step approaches,—'tis yet the dead of night. Kind prisoner, when you shall be liberated, seek out Vicchy, Duke of Eissenburg, to apprise him of the fate of his spell-bound brother."

"ALBERT OF EISSENBURG."

To attempt to describe the agitation of mind, with which this announcement was received by Vicchy, would be a vain endeavour. His brother, whom he yet remembered,—a fair-haired boy of nine years of age (himself being twelve months the senior), was here ascertained to be that sentinel, over whose mysterious lot, he had so often pondered. Albert, it appeared, had been the prime agent in that crime, of which Vicchy was falsely accused, and which was the first, and actuating cause of his outlawry and misfortunes. He suspected, in an instant, what indeed was the truth, that the fatal mistake must have originated in some strong family likeness; and he, at the same time, recollected, and understood the drift of the inquiry, preferred by Pereny, in the chateau of Count Rodna, when that graf asked him, whether he had not a brother?

While still in the full turmoil of consternation, which so wonderful a discovery was calculated to excite, men's steps were heard descending the flight of steps, leading to his cell, and the flap of a little grating, in the centre of the door being first opened, a moment after, the huge portal was flung back, and a lofty plume stooped itself, that its owner might cross the threshold. A masked figure, en-

veloped in an ample mantle, was ushered into the prison, by the jailor, who immediately retired. At the first glance, which Hubert gave the stately form, his brother's eventful life, and melancholy catastrophe,—the princess's abduction,—his own outlawry,—all reminiscences, that, only the instant before, mingled, and rioted in his brain, were wholly obscured, and overpowered. He beheld, with his mind's eye, as he did with visible organ, but one tremendous object. The man, or rather fiend, whose feelings, he knew from experience, were inaccessible to pity,—he could see nothing in all the world, but this being come unto him for vengeance,—vengeance for councils betrayed, and trust violated. All power, and strength seemed to go out of his limbs, and he felt, as if he could have sunk into the earth. Veronica, on the stranger's being introduced into the dungeon, prepared to take her departure.

"Adieu! father, for the next two hours," she said, and waved her hand, but she did not observe the little regard that Hubert paid to her words, or movement. Alas! guilt will dry up the very sinews of courage, and the idea of having to hold colloquy with the being, we have consciously betrayed, face to face, when he fronts us, as an accuser, must work in the brain, like cowardice. Circumstances, and his own vacillancy, had turned Eissenburg into a double traitor; first, to the state he professed to serve; and next, to the Cygani tribes, whose sworn spy and federary he was pledged, at the same time, that he advised the great Richter Iwan, of their secret councils. But it was the remembrance of his having opened the mysterious packet, which, at that minute, floated uppermost, and was alone *objective* in the rolling waters of the magnat's mind.

It was this thought, which, withering him all over, as with a cold palsy, left him motionless, idealess, almost breathless. He trembled before the chief of the Cyganis, like one, touched by the wand of Prospero,—

the very quivering statue of man! Veronica stepped to the door of the dungeon, with the intention of retiring, when the masked foreigner, placing himself before her, addressed her in as courteous accents, as gallantry ever modulated, and which, to a degree, she could not account for, thrilled through all her frame. The tones of his voice seemed to form the key to some horrible reminiscence, which had been once impressed in deep dyes on her heart, though now nearly effaced.

"Verily, fair maiden," he said, "I cannot suffer your departure. I find, to my surprise, I obtrude on hallowed ground — the air, an angel perfumes, with the incense of her breath, becomes sanctified, and her presence transforms a prison into a temple."

Veronica was about to answer, when thus the stranger proceeded.

"Nay, you shall not leave your father — he will, indeed, be to be envied, who is destined to receive, for life, from thy sire's hands, so inestimable a gift, as that of thy hand, fair lady; but, till that severing of your kindred loves, the tie, that binds ye is far too intimate, and too sweet, to be rudely snapped, or disregarded. I would not, for the world, for any trivial cause, or personal convenience, part such dear company. My business with your father can be transacted an hour hence, quite the same as now. Lady, I take my leave." Thus speaking, he would have caught her hand, but she shrunk from his touch, as from that of an aspic. She felt convinced, that she must have both seen him, and heard him converse, many years before, and that too, under peculiar and impressive circumstances. An inexpressible loathing came over her; his horrible malisons of yesterday, were far from being obliterated, from her memory, by the honeyed phrases, with which, it suited his present purpose, to astonish her; but she felt, that in the maleficent being before her, she beheld something, antipathous to her

very soul. She merely replied, however, in as calm a voice as she could assume, while, with increased rapidity of pace, she neared the threshold. "I was about to withdraw, when you entered — excuse me, sir knight."

The foreigner profoundly bowed, and Veronica left him, with her father, in the dungeon.

MANUSCRIPT XIII.

"Quid parit hæc rabies, quid sacer iste furor?"
Elæg. 5. *Milton.*

Gentle reader, has it escaped your recollection, that in the manuscript before the last, Ragotzy, Swartz, and Sigismund, being assembled together, in the sepulchral vaults, beneath the site of St. Theresa's church,—the former personage evanished, in a very will-o'-the-wisp sort of fashion, leaving his confederates to their "own aversion?" Do you recollect? — you do, — well then, if you be not afraid, and have, otherwise, no particular engagement, we would thank you to go back with us to that aforesaid sepulchre: Nay, not in *propriâ persona*, but only mentally "Horatio,"—only in imagination—so come along, and hearken to a voice, that whispers a single word, in the ear of Count Ragotzy.

"Whither?" he demanded, in the same low key.

"To Unna!"

"Wherefore? — at this hour? but I obey."

The end of a scarf was immediately insinuated, into the open hand of the chieftain, by which clue, he was gently led to the base of the cenotaph of John of Zapola; hence, by the mechanism of a sinking floor, he descended to the clay-cold cave beneath, where, alone, and in darkness, he awaited the coming of his parent. More

than half an hour, according to the impatient, and imperfect reckoning of the capitany, had tediously elapsed, ere the reflection of a light, upon the earthy sides of the chamber, and the echo of her imperious step, scorning surprise, gave warning that this potent and superhuman being, was at hand. After having set her lamp near the sill, or entrance of the vault, she came forwards, and addressed the bandit capitany.

"Alaric," she said, "what art thou about in Hermanstadt?"

"State affairs, good mother," was the cool response.

"Say rather thine own, rash and short-sighted mortal!" returned Unna, — "thine. The interests of the Cyganis abhor slaughter; but nothing can appease thy insatiate thirst for blood, which is as blind, as it is quenchless. Last night, thou wouldst have made a rare, and royal feast, but thy quarry was not forthcoming. To-night, thou prowlest in company; but, wet-lipped tiger! thine errand is still the same — blood! blood! blood!"

"Mother," observed Ragotzy, "this repetition of a worn-out tale, defeats its own purpose: like the reverberated echo of our voices, along these sinuous passages,—your monitor falls fainter on the ear, at every repercussion. I heed you not."

"Heed me not!" answered Unna! in a voice more gloomy than before. "Thou thick-eyed beetle, whom the heavens strike blind before they punish — not heed me! — wilt thou heed *Him?* Alaric, the cry is out against thee!—again, a price is upon thy blood. I would have remonstrated, but I was cut short with a word. The life of the Princess Beatrice, had been, a second time, attempted by thee! What could I say after that?—Nevertheless, I did speak for you—I urged—I threatened, and my threats are fatal — they have proved so. Even unto his victim, I have already half-divulged the truth: Oh, God! forgive my rage."

"What mean you?" said Ragotzy.

"But, thine the fault,—on thy head be the punishment," proceeded Unna, with increased vehemence. "Thy crimes, Alaric, admit of no alleviation,—at once, devilish, and superfluous."

"That they are the former, may be like enough," returned the bandit; "but surely not superfluous."

"Now, hear me, my son," said Unna, more calmly. "Last night, and again to-night, hast thou sought these vaults, with the fixed resolve to commit assassination. For the blood of the African, let Ferdinand answer it; but, the Princess Beatrice, whose life was preserved, it seems, by the forecast of father Dominick,—what embrion in thy brain seemed to require her death?"

"Her blood was needed to glue me faster to the throne I aimed at," answered Alaric, doggedly, "I owe her no ill-will, but I could not pause to pity her."

"Thou pity!" exclaimed Unna; "when didst thou ever pity? Yet, again I ask, how would her death advantage thee?"

"She knows the secret," answered Ragotzy; "and might, in some compunctious moment of her madness, blab her child's parentage, after I had married Czerina."

"Thou marry the Lady Czerina!" cried Unna, with symptoms of astonishment, partaking of dismay.

"To be sure I would, and will; what think you I came hither for, else? — why not, prithee? — I must be king of Hungary, notwithstanding that, that Iwan, who is my evil genius, hath slain the Waivode, who with his whole force was pledged to aid me. I would become a throne as well as Czerina, I warrant me; and my title, at any rate, were as well founded."

"Thou marry the lady Czerina!" reiterated Unna. "Fool! fool! you know not what you babble of!"

"Ha! I tell you I do, and will act what I say," replied the self-willed chieftain.

"Peace, Alaric!" cried Unna; "strangle that monstrous thought in the birth, or, being born, hold it at

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arm's length from thee; shake it off, as you would a viper, from your bosom; — this can never be!"

"Not be! do you think so? Then hear me, mother," answered Ragotzy. He stopped, and only, after a long pause, thus proceeded: "Last summer, when Erdély was one wide theatre of rebellion, and the Bloody Peter, and our Wallachian confederates, ravaged the country, from north to south, I was apprized, that the Archduke Ferdinand was on the eve of assembling a large army, under the pretence of quelling the insubordination, so prevalent in Transylvania, but really, with the view of taking military possession of the province. On hearing this, I debated with myself, what part it behoved the Cygani people to play, in the impending struggle. I had reason to fear, that, under the acknowledged domination of any power, whether Austrian or Ottoman, the reign of anarchy would insensibly subside, in that death-sleep of the soul, which is brought on by servitude; and I inferred from the unresisted authority of either, the gradual resurrection of order, and the unshackled administration of martial law,.. a result, which the interests of our people too clearly deprecated. I apprehended, that the charter of the Bishop of Funfkirchen to Thomas Polgar, countersigned, for so many years, by the authorities, would never be ratified, by the Austrian. I foresaw, we should be withheld from injury, by the laws, and from public rapine, by the arms of the conqueror. What was then to be done? The course of events hurried me on; the dread of foreign tyranny, heightened by present licence, and impunity, was stimulated, by the ambition of fame, and unshackled power. One act alone, I perceived, might suspend our ruin, and, by that act, my mother, *is* our ruin suspended. I resolved, by a master-stroke of policy and daring, to enfranchise Transylvania, for ever, from the regal pre-eminence of a single tyrant, or, at all

events, for the present, to balance the respective claims of Solyman, of Ferdinand, and of Czerina."

"I understand you not," said Unna.

"Nay," rejoined Ragotzy; "hear patiently, what I have to unfold, and then refuse to applaud me, if thou canst. Disguising my person, I darted, swift and secret, by a circuitous route, through the hostile country, and, on an appointed day, hailed certain of my fellows, during the celebration of high mass, in the abbey of Coloswar. The Var* of that city is intrusted to the joint command of two governors,† named invariably by the Diet, and whose appointment is, consequently, independent of him, you wot of — the guardian, I would say, of the queen of Hungary. I was desirous to anticipate the projects of the archduke, whilst Transylvania was still free; so, before, as yet, the waves of Duna,‡ reflect the glittering pride of the Austrian eagles, I watched my opportunity, and already, ere the first lances of Ferdinand gleamed along the defile of the *White Mountains*; or, mingled with the pinnacles of Alba Julia, were touched, by the sun of Erdély, the deed is done, good mother. I got the start of the invader, and forestalled the golden prize, he aimed at. Every description of disguise had been prepared. I made my appearance before the gates of the castle, followed by my esquire, and twelve arquebusiers on horseback. My safe-conduct, and letter from Martinuzzi to the governor, recommending me to the hospitable offices of his excellency, are presented.—You apprehend it all, I see, good Unna; — the pass, the missive, the signature, the armorial ensigns attached — all capital forgeries; they would have staggered the lord regent himself. 'Tis the old story; the bait took, and your son was admitted within the Castle of Coloswar,..

* Var, castle.

† "Duumvirati."—*Peter de Reva*, cent. vi.

‡ Duna, the Danube.

but alone. So jealous, in regard to strangers, were the regulations of the Var, that my train was compelled to remain, without the walls. This strictness, on the part of the governor, was unlooked for, and I found myself thrown upon the instant resources of my own mind. As a friend of the regent, no suspicion could attach to my purpose. Luckily, one of the governors, Count Raoul, was absent upon duty. By Count Oldimar, his colleague, I must admit, I was most nobly entertained. A splendid banquet closed the evening. The wine circulated, and I knew, it was a means, better than the rack, to get at secrets. So watching, with joyous anticipation, the vintage dye purpling his lip, I plied the bottle, till, as the carouse deepened, his heart grew, and reeled, with the grape of *Szégszárd.** Then, Unna, I gave our discourse the direction of my wishes; and soon, with much earnestness, sought to be permitted to look upon the treasure of the castle. This, you will presently see, was requiring, from my entertainer, an absolute breach

* *Grape of Szégzárd.* — The rich juice, expressed from this grape, is of a deep red, and hardly considered inferior to the Tocai Ausbruch, the Boisson de Hongrie, par excellence. By the way, we in England are apt to take for gospel the critical eulogium of the butler, in "High Life below Stairs," on the "Imperial Tocai;" but, according to Redì, in his "Bacco in Toscana," the Montepulciano of Italy might contest the palm, and that on the dictum of no less an authority than the jolly god himself: —

> "Onde ognium che di lieo
> Riverente il nome adora
> Ascolti questo, altissimo decreto
> Che Bassareo pronunzia, egli dia fè,
> *Montepulciano d'ogni Vino é il Re.*"

Thus rendered by Leigh Hunt: —

> "Then all that bow down to the nod
> Of the care-killing vintager god,
> Give ear and give faith to his edict divine,
> That *Montepulciano's the King of all Wine.*"

of faith, and an infraction of the Orders of the Diet. At first, he would willingly have turned the conversation; then, finding I persisted in my purpose, he thought to silence me by a dignified refusal; but, marry! I would take no rebuff, so that, ere long, his firmness gave way, and, in the end, he was weak enough to yield to my reiterated entreaties.

"It wanted an hour of midnight, and all the castle's eyes were sunk in slumbers, when Count Oldimar conducted me to the most retired, and inaccessible point of the fortress of Coloswar. With stealthy pace, we crept along, and he poured oil, from the silver lamp, into the several hinges and wards, ere he soundlessly turned the keys; and now, having reached the goal, the noiseless door gave way, on a slight pressure, and admitted us. We stood beside the consecrated treasure; then, whilst the Castellan hung over the glittering charge, committed to his custody, and was in the act of illustrating, to his perfidious guest, the several wonders of the miraculous deposit, I drew my dirk, and —" Here Ragotzy paused, and lowering his voice to one of horrid stillness, presently added, "'Twas one blow! *only one*, mother; and, methinks, Count Oldimar never broke troth again!"

"Son!" cried Unna, "'twas a wicked deed. Ah! Alaric, remorse, on some after day, will wrap your fierce heart around for this, and, like a ravening serpent, corrode, where he makes his lair."

"Oh! I wot well all you would say as to that, good mother," resumed Ragotzy, breaking in on the half pause in Unna's speech; "but, prithee, hear me out. To clothe myself in the garments of the governor, and seize the guerdon of my daring, was my first care. I then passed without the keep, and closed the door, upon the bloody corpse of Oldimar. There, the Castellan yet lies, clotted, and festering in his gore. I heard, since, 'twas given out, he had been transported away, by a

demon in the form of man; and, perhaps, as to that, the good folks of Coloswar were not so far out. That apartment, however, has never, I believe, hitherto been subjected to search. Under the circumstances, it was unlikely, it would be suspected. I was careful to replace the several keys in the spot, from whence, I observed the governor, first, to take them down, and issued from the castle, in the guise, and semblance of his excellency himself. I passed several sentinels, undetected, and unchallenged; joined my comrades, who were within hail; took horse, and bore away, in triumph, my inestimable prize, to our cunicular fortress, in the neighbourhood of Coloswar."

"And this prize was — ?"

"The regalia of Hungary, mother!" replied the bandit, with exultation :— "the sword of justice, the sceptre of dominion, and that diadem, which, they tell us, angelic creatures fabricated."

"The Regalia!" exclaimed Unna: "I ever understand that the sacred ornaments were tabernacled at Vissegrade."

"So they were used, but after the death of John of Zapola, the nobles of Hungary, for greater security, had them removed thence, first to Buda, and then into Erdély," returned Ragotzy. "Mark you the issue, good mother?" he continued—"Why, in such superstitious regard, do these weak nations hold this divine present, that, in my proper person, as the son of the Gipsy Polgar—nay, as the brigand capitany,* having that golden type in pawn,—I would be sooner acknowledged their king, by the people of Hungary and Transylvania, than would the lineal monarch, uncrowned, and so unsanctified by Heaven's benizons!—And think you, mother," he demanded, "I having preserved her imaginary inheritance, and being empowered to gift, with so incalculable a dowry, as the crown of Hungary, that maid, whom I

* Capitany — chieftain.

take to my bed, that Czerina will be so ill-advised, as to refuse my hand ?"

" Better had she never seen the light, than wed thee, Alaric!" exclaimed Unna, in a tone, which faltered, with inward horror.

" Perhaps so," observed Alaric, " but wed me she shall, notwithstanding.

" Son, you know not what you say,—you know not what you purpose," cried Unna. " Think not of such visions,—let thy mind no longer hold dalliance with this phantom thought,—this shadow of an impossible thing. If thy crimes be legion, here were the master fiend."

" You mouth it finely," said Ragotzy, " though a word in season would outvalue all these heroics ;—but now, what matter presses, that thus you sound a parley, at such an hour, and summon me from my friends ?"

" Ha ! there again," exclaimed Unna—" another victim, it seems, must be offered up to the demon of blood, which hath possessed thee. What can Vicchy have done to thee, that only his life might expiate the offence ?"

" The villain !" cried Ragotzy, " would you think it ? has opened the packet, I intrusted to him, wherein the confession of Alicia, which involves the fate, and the fortunes of Hungary, lay buried, as in a tomb. I only deal him God's justice. He hath eat of the tree of knowledge, and shall taste of death."

" Ha ! what's that you utter ?" cried Unna, in a sort of a half scream, and turning upon Ragotzy, with a look, which even made him start.

" Do I not tell you," he replied, " that Hubert broke the signet, which ——"

The bandit was interrupted, by the shrill tones of Unna's voice, exalted to their highest pitch. With foaming lip, and sparkling eye, as with one hand she threw back her *dolman*, and raised the other, as if in the act of inspiration, she shrieked out, " Ha! ha! it is working; the unravelling of the intricate ways of the lofty, and the

proud is going on. I knew, it would be so,—who can controul the stars? One signet is broken, but not the other, and the scriptures are yet unpublished, and so the riddle of destiny is only half explained. Alaric, where is that confession, which makes the teeming burden of the packet of Alicia? How came you by it? Where is it now?"

Count Ragotzy regarded his mother with some surprise, ere he vehemently replied—"Flown,—disappeared, at least, so that smooth daughter of the hypocrite would have me believe; but I will pierce into the heart of Hubert, and force him to lay open, with my looks, the secret of their bourne."

"Ah! I knew," said Unna, "when I observed thee, awhile ago, in the chapel overhead, and marked the smile illumining thy dark brow, like the flashing lightning the gloomy krapacks, and heard thee name thy resolution, to see Hubert this night, that, in thy heart, thou meditatedst his destruction. I could not mistake thy purpose, and so I sent for thee hither, to set thee right. Let me see. How stands the aspect of the house of Thomas Polgar?" She remained in a musing attitude, and fixed her black rolling eyes, with all the ardent intensity of inspiration, upon the ground, as if the future were dimly shadowed out to her mental vision. Thus, for a short time, she stood, with compressed lips, inwardly muttering some unholy orison, and when she spoke, it was in a low indistinct voice, as if still wrestling with her thoughts—"Broke,"—she muttered—"by him! by Eissenburg!—he knows her parentage then,—but no more—nor Alaric,—what need they ever should? Fate has reversed her disk: she, who sat in Heaven's sunshine, the delicate, and the tender, is left in deep obscurity,—and her history is, in turn, to be illustrated and hallowed, who has hitherto been immersed in the shadows of adversity. So, the one stake is up. And will then thy trust fail thee at last, and thou be confounded with shame? Aspiring

soul!" she continued, in the tremulous accents of sorrow, which contrasted strangely, with the loftiness of her language, and supernatural pretensions—"aspiring soul! hath thy prosperity reached its summit,—and dost thou already await the revolution of the descending wheel? and have I lived, and loved, and laboured for this? With these words, her head sunk on her breast, and she hurriedly drew her shrivelled hand across her eyes, ere she resumed, in the same subdued, and plaintive accents as before. But the star of Alaric culminates in the horizon, as heretofore, nor shall he anticipate the general doom of his race, by giving the reins to his intemperate passions. Then, how? Can the stars lie? No, but they show many turnings, and I will balance their decrees, and hedge out of ruin. Veronica, of Eissenburg, must become the *Cygani Menyasgony*."* She paused for an instant;—again, by her fixed eye, her thoughts would seem to run on into the future, and then, at last, addressing her son, who had looked on, the while, with a sort of unfilial sneer of incredulity,—"You tell me," she observed, "that Hubert is possessed with the mystery of the packet?"

"Doubtless," answered Ragotzy—"If the documents were taken from their envelope, he must know all."

"Then, he is aware, that Czerina ———"

"Of course," interrupted Ragotzy.

"But does he surmise, who is the only, and true heritor?" interrogated Unna.

"What heritor? how—whom?" demanded the other quickly, and with eager look, as if he expected to learn something of deep interest; but if so, he deceived himself; for his haggard parent merely rejoined—"True, true; as you say, how should he?"

"Will she never have done playing prophet with me?" thought Ragotzy to himself, in the mutual, silence which succeeded.

* Czigàni Menyasgony—The Gypsy Bride.

"Alaric," inquired Unna, at length, "did you ever hear tell of an Hungarian baron, named Walstein?"

"Baron Walstein," answered Ragotzy, "assuredly! The first cousin of John of Zapola; his daughter married this Eissenburg."

"The same," said Unna. "Then the offspring of the union of the Duke of Eissenburg and the Lady Veronica, in default of King John's issue, ought to sit upon the throne of Hungary."

"Ha, surely! beyond a doubt;" answered Ragotzy.

"Well, son, and who is she?" demanded Unna.—"Were it not," she continued, "more the part of a wise man, think you, to wed with this lady, than to assassinate her father?"

Ragotzy started: the idea was as lightning.

"Consider," proceeded the Boszorkani, "the same moment, that Eissenburg became instructed in the rotten tenure of Czerina's inheritance, he learned his daughter's rights."

The brigand, looked as if his whole tide of thought had undergone a revulsion. "Ha, ha!" he cried, "the light breaks in upon me. Mother, thou art my better angel. I know not why it is," he presently added, "but it is abhorrent to flesh and blood to slaughter a man—I mean for no object; so let Vicchy live, and he shall give me his daughter; at whose blest thought, the spirit of joy moves upon my blood. I will first endow her with the regalia of St. Stephen, and then marry her kingdom outright. Hey, my oracular mother! is that one of the decrees of fate?"

A deep, clear accent replied, as if from the bottom of the earth, so like it sounded

> "unto a tone,
> Such as sick fancies, in a new-made grave,
> Might hear—" *

"*She shall be queen!*"

* Shelley.

"Those words—were they yours, my son?" asked Unna.

"Did you speak, mother?" inquired Count Ragotzy.

Both, casting their startled eyes around, made answer in the negative.

The echoes of the vault could hardly have returned the words of Ragotzy, so distinct and emphatic was the intonation.

"We had better part now," said Unna presently, in a half whisper. "Here, take this signet-ring of Martinuzzi, and to-morrow, by its means, you can gain access to Vicchy."

"This ring? how came you by it?" asked Ragotzy.

"No matter," answered his mother. Let us hie to the church of St. Theresa, and there separate."

"What have become of Swartz, and that wretched madman, Rodna?"

"That wretched madman, as you style him, I have secured, for you to bear away, into safe custody. The keeper, I will see to myself, for old acquaintance sake. But mark, the nodding stylactites drip against our lamp; unless we remove hence, we shall be left in darkness."

The Cygani leader, and his parent were preparing to quit the gloomy precincts, where they held their conference, when they were made sensible of the existence of a kind of shadowy outline of a human form, melting into the depths of the vault. With a horrible ejaculation, Ragotzy made a rush at the receding figure, and, gaining upon it, would have struck the object of his pursuit, to the earth.

"An you push forwards at that rate, in the dark, for any time, you may chance to knock your head against a stone, my Egyptian!" exclaimed a voice, which Ragotzy immediately recognized, for that of Count Rodna.

"How! have you got loose, my heretic hero?" de-

manded the Cygani; "I understood, you were left all alone, to your own, and the dungeon's vapours."

"It were a sin to submit to such confinement," replied Sigismund; "so my folly sought to escape, and here I am."

"Is your folly wont to be your guide and prompter, to such purpose?" inquired Ragotzy.

"Not always," returned Sigismund; folly, however, is a good friend; or, if otherwise, 'tis the best, that most of us have to trust to, on this side the grave. Had Count Oldimar been less eloquent, his tongue had wagged still; had my grandsire been as I am, he'd not perished. I covet no more wit, than as much, as will keep life and soul together. Egad, man! I would but live. But here's your mother, and her folly is the greatest, I ever heard of, or she would never have made it my duty to destroy, root and branch, the name of Polgar, from out of the land."

Ragotzy's brow darkened, as if charged with thunder, and his eye seemed to launch the lightning, as he began—"Ten thousand devils! how do you dare—"

"Son," interrupted Unna, in a whisper, "'tis vain contending with his maniac humour; let us lead him to Swartz, who will prepare him, for his abduction to the Samos."

"Nay, I will have no hand in this business," exclaimed Ragotzy; "why should I play jailor to a mad bully, like that? Let Swartz keep his bail."

"Alaric," said Unna, tightening her fingers forcibly round the arm of her son, and speaking, in a solemn and earnest whisper—"Alaric, that bail is of more worth than you imagine. Take the advice of one, who knows how to avert, not merely the influence of the stars, but human combinations, which are often more withering, and more fatal. Lay hold of this opportunity: keep watch and ward over that youth, and never—never let him elude your vigilance."

The voice, in which this was delivered was so impressive, that even the impatient temper of Ragotzy was awed to obedience. He silently intimated his assent, and shortly afterwards, the three emerged behind the altar of the Virgin, in the cathedral church of St. Theresa.

MANUSCRIPT XIV.

All was still,
Save the quick throb of pulse and stifled breath,
Like trem'lous life anticipating death,
And silence spake denial, &c.
From a Sonnet—Charles I. demanding the Five Members.

Vox nulla sonabat,
Nec fremitus, nisi corda micantia spiritus atque
Compressus; mortem expectat sic territa vita:*
Conclamant prohibens silentia, &c.
The Same.

Αλλα δηλονοτι δυο εστοι ψυχα, και οταν μεν η αγαθη κρατῆ τα καλα πραττεται· οταν δε η πονηρα, τα αισχρα επιγεῖρεται.

Zenophon.

This history may not unaptly be compared to that oblong convenience of modern days, yclept an omnibus; for it conveys odd characters short distances, without asking unnecessary questions: and as its archetype, stage after stage, so doth our narrative, chapter after chapter, find itself occupied, with different people. There occurs, however, this remarkable difference; that whereas the successive passengers of the omnibus have commonly no sort of affinity, or connection with one another—our several chapter loads are, voluntarily or involuntarily, more or less interested, in the dim and shadowy mainspring of these mysteries; and one and all are so many puppets, taken up and set down, by Monsieur le Conducteur, after a scheme of his own, not very consistent with their "delusive sense" of liberty.

At some such conclusion the gentle critic will arrive, if he only patiently bear with our jolting for awhile, and considerately make allowance, for any unpleasingness or natural defects, incident to so novel a mode of conveyance. All experiment is fallible; and the literary *curriculum*, for which we would fain obtain toleration, and a licence, is truly a tentative set-out, and constructed, as we are well aware, of very slight materials—

"A quab, 'tis nothing else, a very quab." *

Let us now, however, "pick up" two of the characters of our dramatic narrative; whom we left, not by the way side, but under lock and key.

Veronica had no sooner retired, from her father's dungeon, than the masked visitor, while raising his avantaile to its full extent, observed; "I find this visor invaluable, during my venturesome trips to Hermanstadt; but any mask is superfluous, between you and me;—we know each other."

Vicchy was never more thoroughly at a loss, in his life. The human tones of Ragotzy's voice, so different from the intonation, he had cause to apprehend, dwelt on his ear, like a reprieve, or rather absolution. He had expected, that the Cygani, (whose executions, when his savage nature was roused, usually followed his sentences, as closely as the clap, the lightning), after sternly, and passionately, pointing out the nature of his offence, would have pronounced his doom, and have inflicted it, with his own hand, upon the spot. Instead whereof, Vicchy hardly recollected to have, ever before, heard Ragotzy, deliver himself so blithely and cordially; so much so, that the federary ventured to raise his eyes, and look his captain in the face. He read nothing there, that contradicted the assurance of the Cygani's speech; his full dark eyes laughed out with positive hilarity. Vicchy, immediately, felt greater

* Ford.

confidence, in the reality of appearances; for he knew, that, while it lasted, the feeling of cheerfulness described, as it were, a magic circle, round about the human heart, which nought, that was false or cruel, could overpass. If the dank soil of hypochondriasis, wherein bad passions germinate, be found unfavourable to that στόμα δίκαιον, which Plutarch esteemed essential to piety—that liberal air, which Pythagoras affirmed to be becoming, in the worship of the Deity, on the other hand, the rationally cheerful man, bears a charmed temperament, which is, or ought to be, not only the teeming parent of every virtue, but, as a celebrated writer expresseth it, "the best foundation for piety, and true religion." *

Is it not joy, which constitutes the respirable fluid of the cherubim and seraphim, at once, the prerogative, and the necessity of their being? The translucent ether of perfect happiness, which, in no fancied, or unauthorised belief, we deem the *fons et principium* of heaven, would alone, in that pure abode, suffice to extinguish the foul, and alien principle of sin. It is not possible, that impenitence and guilt, can respire the defecated element of bliss, which is the portion of supernals. Even while reeling, amidst the fumes of this low earth, and inhaling the inebriating vapours, ordinary to mortality; the man, conscious of his iniquity, can have no title to that tranquillity of mind, which is the natural effect of innocence, nor can he, at best, without difficulty, counterfeit a transient satisfaction.

Thus Hubert, instantaneously, argued; and he remembered, moreover, that Count Ragotzy was not in the habit, either of disguising his sentiments, or of reining in his passions. From his free aspect, therefore, Vicchy drew a favourable omen; and, whatever lurked behind, he was satisfied, it was not the overwhelming indignation, beneath which, in idea, he at first cowed,

* Lord Shaftesbury, Characteristics, Enthus. § 3.

and which, he knew, must sweep before it, like straws in the whirlwind, every species of explanation, or resistance.

The explosion, which he had had reason to apprehend, he meant to have shunned, and set at defiance, by striking his tent, and, afterwards, keeping close, within the camp of the Richter Iwan.

"Methinks, these are sorry quarters, De Eissenburg, for an approved soldier, and a true magyar, like thyself;" continued Ragotzy, giving, at the same time, a careless look round, on the dingy walls of the dungeon.

In these few words, besides the blandness of tone, with which they were spoken, and the unwonted feeling of courtesy, their sense might seem to manifest, two points struck the hearer, as remarkable:— first the incidental mention of his military profession, and of the country of his birth, both allusions being, in Hubert's apprehension, designedly introduced; and, secondly, the circumstance of his addressing him by his title:— *an accident*, which had not before happened, since that nobleman, became the thrall of the Cygani leader. Vicchy's observation of these particulars, descended upon his sunken heart, like a gentle shower upon the arid meadows, after a long drought, in summer. His hopes, and wishes, intents,—righteous or desperate, defined or undefined,— all seemed to spring forth, with something of their first freshness;—brightly, and greenly as heretofore.

"Indeed, Lord Ragotzy," he replied, "this prison is no very desirable domicile for any man."

"And, if I err not, thou shalt not be immured here, for long," quickly returned the Cygani.

Considering there were two short, and opposite paths, diverging from that dungeon,— the one conducting to freedom, the other to the scaffold, this ambilogy did not sound quite satisfactory, to the party interested; but, in like manner, as we are told, by Sterne, that a French-

man will, invariably, take a dubious compliment, in the manner in which it seems to be meant; so is it the characteristic of misfortune, never to discern any ambiguity, in the language of consolation, or of sympathy.

In answer, to the critical speech of Ragotzy, Vicchy replied, "I hope so, for I much weary of the monotony of this confinement."

"Especially, Eissenburg, since thou hast caught a glimpse of the near fulfilment of the prophecy of Unna," rejoined Ragotzy; and a shrewd expression twinkled in his eyes, past his hearer's decyphering: "You would be up, and doing," he presently added: "I understand you, man."

"And, if so," thought Vicchy to himself, "'tis more than I can predicate of you."

However, the memory of the prediction of the Boszor kany, was ever floating on the mind of the wretched magnat; and the whole future, seemed concentrated in the fulfilment of that prophecy. Every thing connected with it, possessed, for Vicchy's breast, an absorbing interest. The golden glory, that was fated, one day, to encircle the brow of Veronica, constantly seemed to shimmer before her father's eyes: and, although nought remained in his possession, of the fatal packet, excepting a single paper, (which might, however, unfold the high vocation of his race, as the last sibylline leaf foreshewed the destinies of Rome), he clung to the fond belief, that those writings, (into whatsoever hands they had fallen), would yet work out, and minister to the greatness of his daughter; through whose agency, he was destined to recover his forfeited rights, and hereditaments. But, although this was a splendid vision, which HE never lost sight of, Hubert hardly comprehended, how the gipsy leader came to allude to it.

"If Ragotzy," he argued, "be conscious, that the specific sense of Unna's prophetic promise, might be

gathered, from the perusal of the packet, there must be some *arrière pensée*, to make the chief submit, with equanimity, to my having examined the deposit, he confided to my hands, and honour: and some spell, doubtless, hinges on my supposed knowledge of this secret, which disarms his resentment.

"What of the prophecy of Unna?" hesitatingly inquired the trembling father, raising his eyes to those of Ragotzy, with an inquisitive and wistful look.

"Why, man, thou canst not have overlooked thy daughter's claims on Hungary, (Hubert started) after having possessed thee of the contents of the packet."

Hubert made a determined motion of dissent.

"Bah! Eissenburg, have done with this. Your daughter would fain have persuaded me, the deposit was stolen:—I am not to be so gulled. You have opened the packet; 'tis useless to deny it; and now, knowing that that bright flower, the Lady Veronica, is destined to shine, like a radiant star, in the firmament of empire, you are disposed to retain the evidence. Nay," he continued, as if desirous still further to assure the wavering confidence, of his companion; "do not fancy, I make a charge upon thee for this; by God! I cannot blame you, for having an eye to your daughter's interests."

Some moments elapsed, before Vicchy mustered self-composure, sufficient to reply.

"I have no evidence to retain:—what you speak of, I may guess at, but know not. Veronica told you truth — the packet is stolen."

Thus Hubert spake, with earnest, and rapid articulation, whilst his heart throbbed impetuously, at the idea of his having actually been placed within the compass of all his most sanguine, though vague, anticipations, to no purpose. It was but the venture of a die between beggary and some mighty, unknown greatness; yet, owing to that evil, which ran like a latent thread, through the warp and woof of his intricate career, the possibility of

redeeming the past reverses of his life, by one counter-cast of fortune, was taken away, by the same active, and invisible agency, as had offered it, to his acceptance. It was as if the juggling powers were sporting with his feelings, and had only proffered him their smiles, to weave more completely their mesh around him. Knowing, that Fortune was a coquet, he had positively forced her very spindle, out of the lagging hands of the hesitating maid. So far as depended on *his* acumen and energy of will, he would, at whatever risk, have fulfilled his destiny. Had he not kept back the packet,—had he not, with nothing on earth to warrant him, to save him harmless, confidently burst open the envelope? Would he not have mastered its secret? And now it turned out, he was right.

Had Veronica heeded his entreaties, all had gone well; but he only discovered, past a doubt, that the forecastings of his soul, were true prompters, when the writings were beyond his controul, and the packet pilfered. The idea was, as the pressed rowel of a spur, in the side of a fiery courser.

"Veronica told you truth," he presently repeated, with increased vehemence.—"The packet *is* stolen!" Ragotzy looked at him steadily for an instant, before he again spoke:—"Stolen," he repeated; "yet, no, it cannot be,—it is impossible."

"'Tis true," said Hubert, doggedly.

Count Ragotzy had entered that cell, firmly persuaded, that the account, given of the loss of the packet, by Veronica, was a subterfuge, to cover her sire's dereliction of honour. It was not readily, his mind admitted a different conclusion; but it never occurred to him, that even if Vicchy's asseveration were to be believed, the mysteries of the packet might have been invaded *previously* to the purloining of the papers, and in how far this was the state of the case, Vicchy gave him no information. "So," thought the brigand, "'tis no use apprizing Eissenburg of

his daughter's rights. Whoever holds these documents, I have no doubt, the lady Czerina will soon be made sensible, that the mysteries are no longer sealed, and Eissenburg's daughter is next heir; meanwhile, my proposal will appear more astounding."

"Well, Eissenburg," he said aloud, after a moment's cogitation; "since the packet's gone, there is no help for it; you will be more careful another time, I warrant; at least, you would be, if ——, but no matter; let it not disturb you." Vicchy preserved a gloomy silence.—"Eissenburg," presently resumed the brigand, "your fair daughter affirmed to me, that you left her in ignorance of there being any other, and perchance a more important trust, confided to your honour,—that of the BOX, I mean. I hope to God you have it secure." Vicchy explained, where he had deposited the charge in question.

"Ha!" answered Ragotzy, "'tis a chance coincidence, which, if my mother knew, she would harp on, by the hour. In Hungarian earth,—under *thy* roof; well, I must needs own, the chapter of accidents sometimes turns up odd occurrents, and this reminds me, for what I have waited on you." He paused for more than a minute, ere he added;—"do you know, my good lord, I would stand indebted to your kind offices, for a great happiness?"

"To mine," Lord Ragotzy?"

"To your friendship, Eissenburg. You are acquainted with my rank."

"Your rank!" thought Vicchy.

"My possessions."

"And how acquired!" said Vicchy, internally.

"You know me for the leader of five hundred tents of the Cygani? Thousands of picked men wait upon my word, and would march at my command, though it were to inevitable death."

"To what tragedy can this be the prelude?" pondered Hubert.

"But one other, in all Hungary, or Wallachia; ay, or I might add, of Erdély, possesses, in fact, such substantial power as myself; you know whom I mean,—the Richter Iwan, and with him, our people will shortly form an alliance, as, heretofore, they may have leagued, with the Moldavian Peter."

"The Richter Iwan is too well instructed in your proceedings, to trust you," was the internal comment of Vicchy.

"Now," continued Ragotzy, "two such redoubtable leaders might, with ease, settle the succession of this kingdom, at their own will; but let that pass,—enough, you know my might."

"Here's a flourish of trumpets! to what, in the name of wonder, is it the induction?" marvelled Vicchy. There was a momentary pause, which Ragotzy again broke.

"Eissenburg," he exclaimed abruptly, "you have a lovely daughter!"

"I have a daughter," said Vicchy; and his cold forbidding eye rested on that of the brigand, for an instant; "but excuse me,—her name must not mingle with aught between thee and me."

"Nay, 'tis of her I came to speak," remarked Ragotzy.

"Of *her?*" repeated Vicchy. Thou!" he stepped aside from the brigand, and became evidently moved. "My Lord Ragotzy," he presently added; "choose some other topic to descant on; there's a religion of the hearth, that 'tis not allowed, nay, which 'tis a sort of blasphemy to prophane, by irreverend allusions. With me, my lord, my child's a sacred point,—pray change the subject."

"Thou art dull, or wilt not guess my meaning," said the Cygani leader; "thy daughter is an angel!" The foot of Vicchy stamped slightly: both his hands were clenched; but his face was turned away. "In short, not to hold you in suspense," proceeded Ragotzy, "I would make her mistress over five hundred tents, and, by your

leave, gift her with the allegiance of twice as many thousand vassals." There is only one word, equivalent to picture Hubert's state of mind, on hearing this sudden declaration, from the lips of Count Ragotzy, and that word is, HORROR.

We have elsewhere expatiated, on that pure, and unalloyed parental love, which made the last redeeming feature, in a character, otherwise polluted, with more than an average share of the weakness and wickedness, that Adam and Eve, between them, contrived to bequeath, to their posterity, as a sort of moral heir-loom, inseparable, from the mould of clay, in which they incarnated, and handed down, the immortal soul, and their own likenesses. It is our belief, that no man, however sunk in vice, and ignorance, but owns some such rallying point, in his character, as this, of Hubert. It is commonly, however, so coated over, with the rust of early associations, and perverse impressions of "concentrated selfishness," (as Moore designates it, in his life of Byron), or else, with the centuried hoar of inherited iniquity, that it would seem to ask a prophet's rod, to "raise the waters" in the rank or sterile soil, and from beneath those shelvings and layers, which have indurated, and incrusted the human conscience. But, nevertheless, couched in some solitary nook, or cranny, of the hard quarry, into which long prejudice, or bad nurture, or the taint of hereditary passion, or the false, and harsh tutoring of adversity, hath metamorphosed the seat of life and tenderness, there *doth* lurk, the one single, bright, and precious jewel,—the pulse-throb of sensibility! the occult type, and evidence of original humanity, more radiant far, than any gem or pearl, hiding in the lap of earth, or in a bed of waters. The main difficulty is, how to make this ray of heavenly ore refulgent, so embedded is it, in the dross, and dirt of earthy matter; but buried, though it be, and still, and dormant, in its dark mine, yet, as, according to the commonest of proverbs, "every man has his weak point," so

surely (thank God !) doth he likewise inherit this particle of his divine origin, which is the key-note to all, that sanctifies the present, and holds out a chance (however faint) of a "new life unto righteousness." This deep vein of feeling will assume every form, and degree of brightness, agreeably to the infinite modifications, which appertain to the lot of mortality. In Hubert, as we have said, it took the shape of parental love.

> "His worn bosom and keen eye would melt,
> Over the innocence of that sweet child,
> The only shrine of feelings undefiled."

That pure shrine was now outraged, by the proposal of Count Ragotzy, that he should consign the innocent, and spotless girl to the "tender mercies," of such an enfeloned monster, as was the Cygani chief; the bare imagination of which, harrowed up every fibre of his soul. He felt, he would as soon hand her over, in the helplessness of her beauty, to the fangs of some wolf, from the recesses of the krapacks, or deliver her, bound hand and foot, to the inhuman caresses of some wet-lipped vampire, as condemn her virgin purity of mind and person, to the marital defacement of the gipsy count. It was a kind of shrinking horror, that curdled through his veins, at the nefandous idea; only the more intense, because, accompanied with the remembrance of the power, and passions of the being, whose offer inspired the sensation. In the first burst of his indignation, he would have liked to immolate the speaker to his resentment, and the next moment, he owned the policy of governing his feelings, and temporizing with the facinorous insulter. Thus, while these antagonist emotions wrestled, like strong athletes, in his soul, he stood in silence, with his arms hanging listless by his side, the veins of his forehead swollen,—his eyes distended, but fixed,—his lips now wide apart, and the instant after, compressed with painful force. Only a father, struggling in the gripe of a notorious homicide, (the prodigy of a century,) can fully enter into the feelings of

Vicchy, or comprehend those sudden spasms, which arose at intervals, from the internal depths of thought, and passed over his visage, like a dark cloud, working his features into a convulsion. Out of this heaving of the under current of his reflections, he was aroused, by the voice of Count Ragotzy.

" What new gorgon's head dost glare at, man? Look away—come, tell me, have I your permission to pay my addresses to the lady Veronica?"

" My lord," replied Vicchy, when he had collected and calmed his voice to speak, in which he succeeded, with some difficulty. " I —— but my child is young—the predatory pursuits, in which you must needs be ever, and inevitably engaged, would hardly accord with her habits, and modes of thinking."

" Why, Eissenburg, what are you dreaming of?" demanded Ragotzy; " My manner of life can be no objection. The lady Veronica, who, years ago, could journey on horseback, from Warsaw to Coloswar, and thence to Vienna, can hardly be fastidious, on the score of having to travel, were there a necessity, a few leagues with her husband."

" Ha! sayest thou?" ejaculated Vicchy, " from Warsaw to Coloswar! how meanest thou by that?"

" Did she not?" asked Ragotzy, looking significantly, and crossing his arms upon his broad chest,—" and so young a thing as she was too! so no more of my itinerant habits. The daughter of her father ought to know, what belongs to the wife of him, who prowls in the red light of the moon." Vicchy clenched his teeth, and closing his two hands with such force, that the long nails pierced through the flesh, with difficulty checked the impetuous answer, which rose to his lips.

" Come, come, Eissenburg," proceeded the Cygani, " the violence of my love cannot brook delay—so I must make suit for your intercession, with the lady Veronica."

Vicchy dared not trust his voice in reply.

Count Ragotzy looked at him earnestly for a minute, with an inquiring eye. "Eissenburg," at length he said, in a low and deliberate tone, "If I can obtain the favour of the lady, I suppose you will consent to our union."

"Never! by the Lord of Heaven and Earth!" cried Vicchy, with startling emphasis. "Never!" and then remained silent.

"Dare you reject my proffer?" demanded Ragotzy, with kindling eyes.

"I have said," replied Vicchy, turning away, in silent disdain.

"This is prodigious!" exclaimed the Count, rising in wrath; "consider my power, my wealth, my influence."

"Were they a hundred fold, Lord Ragotzy, what they are," answered Hubert, in a decisive, but quiet tone, "knowing what I know, my daughter should never, with my consent, unite her fate to thine."

The eyes of the Cygani flashed fire. "Thou art not mad?" he exclaimed; "thou might'st be free, I tell you, thy outlawry reversed, thy rank, thy office, thy wealth restored; all by my means."

"Rank, office, wealth, in such a comparison, are vain and flying vapours," replied Vicchy. "Heaven's life! I'd rather linger out my days in this dungeon, and be graved here alive, unrighted and unknown, than purchase an empire of freedom, at such a price!"

The dark brow of Ragotzy, was stricken with red, and he set his teeth hard—"But dost thou not dread my vengeance, Vicchy?" he demanded fiercely.

"Thou splendid robber!" made answer the other, giving way to the burst of uncontrolled, and irrepressible indignation, which the subject inspired; "Thinkest thou, then, so meanly of thy victim, as to suppose, I would sacrifice my blessed, and innocent daughter to irremediable misery, through fear of what thou canst do to me? Be undeceived, Lord Ragotzy! Thou boughtest me, 'tis true, body and soul, for a mess of porridge; yet, even on the

bridge of the Vienne, in the perfect beggary of my fortunes, I accepted that funereal prosperity, thou shower'dst on me, solely and singly, for the sake of my poor starving girl. Thinkest thou, if I could have imagined her life was to be rescued, only that she should, in after-years, become a property to advance thy politic ends, I would not have spurned thee, and thy gold alike? Oh! rather far, with fierce corrosives, would I have defaced my child, until she were barked, and encrusted round, into one loathsome leper, or, if that promised no salvation for her, have let her fast, and decay, piecemeal, into the innocent grave I'd dug for her, and looked on with tearless eye,—ay! dear, as Veronica is to my heart,—have smiled, as I heard the stiffened clods rattling on her hearse, and triumphed, to think, it pleased heaven to save one, I loved, from such contamination and despair, as must be her portion, whose cruel fate connects her with your lot."

It required no ordinary stimulus, to draw from Vicchy's lips, such direct and uncalculating language, as the foregoing; nor was it often, that Count Ragotzy's ears were fated to tingle at such, from any man. He was not the person quiescently, to brook opposition to his wishes, more especially an opposition, couched in terms of disrespect, and opprobrium, but (as will sometimes happen,) the very novelty of the occurrence,—his surprise, at what he deemed the audacity of the speaker, overwhelmed, and counteracted the instant, and adequate expression of that resentment, which Vicchy's declaration was otherwise calculated to elicit,..a resentment, which, notwithstanding his momentary calm, Ragotzy, in the very depths of his soul, felt and acknowledged. His eyes sparkled, with the glare of the most ferocious vindictiveness, as he exclaimed, "By all the powers of darkness! thou shalt yet pay dear for this insolence!" He stopped abruptly, thrusting his right hand violently, within the folds of his vest, and then, playing with the hilt of his dirk, with nervous irritability, as if doubtful, whether the provocation,

he had already received, justified his plunging the blade into the heart of the offender. Well was it for Vicchy then, that the ferocious chief was unaware of his treacherous correspondence, with the Richter Iwan, and had besides, by good fortune, been left in ignorance of his having opened the packet. Count Ragotzy's knowledge of either of these dishonourable transactions, would have been as bands of iron round the promptings of that fierce temper, whose outbreak nearly choaked him. As it was, the Cygani leader was fain to content himself with imprecating, not a few of the Mano's blessings on the head of his "circumspect" associate. And then, observing, that not another word escaped Vicchy, but that he stood, as unmoved at his vehement vituperation, as some firm rock at the light spray, which spits against its front, Count Ragotzy, after glaring in the eyes of his quondam follower, with the glance of a wild and wounded animal, in a phrenzy of baffled rage, burst out of the dungeon.

Several days elapsed since the stormy proceedings narrated above, and Vicchy, hearing nothing of Count Ragotzy, began to flatter himself, that if his prison walls shut him out from liberty, they were, in some measure, a line of circumvallation, which protected him, from the assaults and machinations of his late commander. Meantime, the wearisome continuity of his solitary ruminations, was divided between vague apprehensions, for the personal safety of his daughter, and an unsleeping yearning, to learn the tenor of that folded-paper, which he carried under his vest. Veronica was punctual in her visitings, and the old housekeeper, Judith, had been daily permitted, to bring provisions of a better quality, than the usual prison rations.

One morning, as the captive was entertaining himself with sad meditations, upon his lot, the jailor entered, and announced, that an order had come down from the Lord Regent, directing, that Vicchy and other state-prisoners should take exercise, at their pleasure, on the

eastern rampart. To that fallen noble, wearied with the dull succession of hour after hour, in his solitary dungeon, this privilege offered a most welcome relaxation. It was the second morning, after the licence, we mentioned, had been vouschafed, that Vicchy leaned, with one shoulder against the parapet, his thoughts busied, with the strange fatality, that seemed to hang over his house, and he was pondering, at the moment, on the extraordinary coincidence of himself, and his lost brother, having been engaged, in the same service, and incarcerated, in the same dungeon, when, suddenly, one, wrapped, from head to foot, in the *szüröd territs'd*, (the threadbare cloak distinctively worn, by the peasants of the country) accosting him, in a low voice, by his name, inquired, if he had any communication for the camp of Iwan. "I only arrived last night, and I am off to-morrow, to join the Richter. I heard, by chance, of this indulgence to the state prisoners, and, at imminent risk, have stolen here, to obtain a minute's speech of you."

Vicchy immediately recognized, in the diminutive form and piercing eyes of him, who spake, the person of the cunning agent, to whom, on several occasions, he had betrayed the councils, and intended movements, so far as he could ascertain them, of the Cygani leader, and thus, not seldom, had enabled the great Richter to disconcert, by a countermarch, the purposed ravages of Count Ragotzy, and so, to disappoint that chief of his anticipated booty. Many a Magyar Var had been saved from scenes of rapine and murder, by the unexpected intervention of the Richter Iwan, at the head of superior forces, till, in course of time, the common people, from having repeatedly witnessed these coincident manœuvres, and remarked, how constantly the hostile demonstrations of the Cyganis were opposed, by the advance of the Wallachian troops, and how invariably the latter put these terrible freebooters to the right about,—began to distinguish the great Richter, by the appellation of their *Isten* or god, and to mark their dread, and detestation of

the gipsy leader, by designating him the *Mano*, or father of all evil. Vicchy was overjoyed to encounter one, unto whom, he thought, he might freely open his mind; and immediately proceeded to advise the Wallachian agent of every circumstance, that had happened, since he last held colloquy with him, which was about a week, prior to his arrest. At the conclusion, though not without some hesitation, Vicchy slowly drew, from his bosom, the folded mystery, which, for successive days and nights, had drank up all the currents of his soul, and frankly requested the other's assistance, to get at its purport. The agent regarded the paper, at first, with an air of languid curiosity; however, the instant his quick eye lighted on the hand-writing, it gleamed like that of a hyæna; it was positively frightful, to catch the changes of his countenance; his whole nature seemed to undergo a revulsion; his usually sallow complexion, assumed a livid, and greenish tinge; the veins upon his swart temples seemed swoln, like corded lines, ready to burst with stretching, whilst his piercing orbs shot forth light, fast as the coruscations of twin meteors. Giving a faint cry, like that of the falcon in his rage, while his quivering lip strove, ineffectually, to body forth the workings of his mind, he extended his bare arm to clutch the paper, as that bird darts on his prey.

Vicchy, startled and astonished, by the abruptness and vehemence of the movement, held it aloof; when, suddenly, the man's wrapping-mantle fell to the ground, and disclosed the dwarf-like figure of the wearer; he was slightly clad — the vest or shirt of linen, hanging, like a doublet, outside the hose, which was of white cloth, was bound down by a broad leather girdle, and, half hid by it, hung a naked, and curiously shaped knife; he wore no jacket or outer covering. The wide sleeves of the shirt were open.* This person made more than one ineffectual attempt to snatch the document, out of

* The Wallachian costume in the sixteenth century. Purchas is my authority.

the hands of Vicchy ; but, perceiving, from the superior height and strength of his opponent, that he had no chance of attaining his purpose, he desisted. Vicchy, who found himself so strangely, and unexpectedly obliged to contest the possession of that paper, whose imagined importance was not a little enhanced, in his estimation, by the mysterious effect, which it wrought on his companion, at length drew sufficient breath, to inquire, what had come to the Richter's very good friend (as the man commonly styled himself), that he forgot his gentle breeding, and played at bob-cherry, for what did not belong to him ?"

This remonstrance shortly brought matters to an amicable issue ; — a parley ensued, the particulars of which the reader will excuse our repeating ; but, ere the close thereof, the Wallachian agent read, aloud, that prohibited paper. With emotions electrical, and indescribable, Hubert's ears drank in the tidings ! — his head swam ! — his heart leaped to his throat ! He stood upon Mount Pisgah, and looked down, upon that promised land, which, with prophetic ken, he had oft, before, beheld, and compassed, as it were, with an eye of faith ; and now, the wide perspective spread out, in all its glory before his vision. A sudden gleam of light flashed upon his mental eye. *He conceived it all ;* — his fond bosom swelled, at the anticipation of the golden round, which was to encircle the brow of his beloved daughter. The Duke of Eissenburg returned to his dungeon another man.

MANUSCRIPT XV.

"Quelquefois mes reveries finissent par meditation, mais plus souvent, mes meditations finissent par la rêverie."
ROUSSEAU *les Reveries.*

"Tum Victor madido prosilias toro."
Nocturni referens vulnera prœlii."
CLAUDIAN *Fescen.*

"Dulcia nocturnæ portans vestigia rixæ,
Quam de Virgineis gesserat exuviis."
CATULLUS, *Carm.* lxvi.

THE scene shifts again to Hubert's cottage. It was on the night, immediately succeeding the afternoon, in which Maximilian Count Pereny rose from his bed of sickness, that two persons held a whispering, and hushed consultation, in the little brick chamber, of which we have before made mention. Their voices were pitched so tremulously low, they seemed to mock the listening sense, as they talked over the interesting subject, they were engaged in canvassing. They were seated close together, and the gleamy lustre of their eyes, at intervals, reflected the only light of the apartment.

"I gave you up," said one of these; "I thought you might have seen cause, to forego your tardy vengeance; so, not hearing further from you, I sent a message

this very day, to the cardinal, by his nephew. I will delay my confession no longer,—the outlawry of Vicchy shall not be terminated, in his death. Discover to me, then, at length, the real villain. *Name him*, that I may denounce, to Martinuzzi, the murderer of the Princess Beatrice. Hubert, I am positive, shall not lie under the stigma of her abduction another day. It is time, he should resume his rank and fortunes."

"Why thou art grown self-willed," returned the other, speaking hardly over his breath. "Since when, hast thou thought fit, to act in this of thine own judgment. I was obliged, suddenly, to leave the capital, and it is only at the peril of my safety, that, under cover of the night, I have ventured back, to bear thee off with me. Even while I speak, horses await us, in the lane, beyond the precipice—let us, then, hasten thither; every minute, we spend here we are in danger."

"*To the precipice!*" whispered the first speaker, whilst his breath, audibly drawn in, through his clenched teeth, attested his horror, at the proposal. "Think you, I would again place my foot on that unhallowed ground, with all its local associations weighing on me,—and at this hour?—not I,—wait till the daylight."

"Tush, tush, Albert; if I did not know thee for a brave man," rejoined the other, in the same low whisper, "I should deem thee an arrant coward.—What! wait here, to be bayed, and hunted down, by some of the regent's hell-hounds, who are on the track for me?—I must begone; promise me, at least, if you will not accompany me, my good fellow, that you do not spring the mine, until I give the signal."

"But when will that be?" demanded the first speaker. "Recollect, how many years you have kept me in pursuit of empty shadows, and all the while, in ignorance of the grounds of your flattering promises—why should we longer procrastinate?"

"I tell you," replied the neighbouring voice, "it must

not be;—to manifest our purpose, before circumstances are ripe for it, were only to ruin ourselves, without hurting the man we aim at. Let us lie in wait — not long — every thing promises a speedy issue."

"Ay, 'twas thus you spoke, when you prevailed upon me to quit my prison, and escape, in your company. I yielded then, because I doubted the continuance of Eissenburg's outlawry; afterwards, I hastened hither, where you have fooled me, day after day, on some frivolous pretence or other. Now, however, that his life is in the quivering of the balance, I hesitate not a moment longer — he shall not suffer."

"Pshaw, man! you fret me. What's Eissenburg to you — let the infatuated traitor perish."

"Ay, it is easy said, and easier done than said; but, he shall NOT perish, I tell you, charged with a crime of which I can clear him, by acknowledging myself the guilty party. I shall, to-morrow, obtain audience of the regent, and fully exculpate Eissenburg."

"And much the regent will thank you! Besides, whom will you accuse? — you know not whose handy work you did. A mere mercenary fool! — you know not your employer's name.—Whose hongrees bribed you to silence?—you know not. Who now addresses you? — you know not.—A likely tale for Martinuzzi's ears!"

"Nevertheless," answered the voice, "it must be told. Because I have been looked on with the evil eye * shall Vicchy be brought to the scaffold?"

"Think you," said the other voice, "that Vicchy was arrested for his outlawry? — If so, be undeceived; he is in prison, because he had connected himself, with the bands of the Cyganis and Wallachians, whilst holding command in the Transylvanian service. Such is his offence, believe me."

* A common Hungarian superstition.

"Is it possible, that his rank is not known?" whispered the other. "Then, were he exonerated from the charge, which caused his outlawry, his birth would stand him in good stead. I shame to remain a puppet, at the beck of one, you do well to remind me, I know nought of. I'll see the cardinal to-morrow, and then tell him all."

"And so will the man, that hired your servile sword, never be brought up to justice," responded the other voice. "You will be silenced, I can tell you that; but he."——

"But he!" retorted the first speaker, "why *he*, why not name his name?"

"'Twould choke you, were I to do so; nevertheless, if you will engage to defer stirring in the matter, for only one week longer, I *will* name his name; and, after that term ———"

"I am free to make my confession?" said the other.

"If you then care to do so — if you *dare*. Will you promise?"

"Then, for one week, I defer my purpose — now, his name — be brief."

"As thought, still, still, in your ear — let not the air catch my words; close, closer yet. I'll show you all! He is — shall I say it? — *he is* ——" The speaker paused, supporting himself on the shoulder of the eager listener, and concluded, with whispering into his ear.

His interlocutor, as he heard the murmured communication, started back, and then grasped the other's arm. "Great God of Heaven! Oh, yet, deceive me not!" he exclaimed, in a voice, which plainly evinced his inward emotion.

"Thunder strike me! an you be not convinced of that, I tell you, when, some day, you behold—but, hearken!" he said, suddenly pausing. "Do you hear that?" A door was now heard to creak upon its hinges, and a heavy step, sounded in the passage.

"Ha!" cried out one of the speakers, "who is't, that issues, from the chamber of Hubert's child?" and he rushed out of the room.

It happened, on this evening, that the fair daughter of Eissenburg retired to her sleeping-room, earlier than usual. She was desirous of shunning her unmannerly guest, that she might not subject herself to a repetition of those disgraceful overtures, which had so sensibly pained and humiliated her, in the instance, we have laid before our readers. She knew, she could not answer for the tone of her indignation, should Maximilian again assail her; and, remembering the means, with which his privileged greatness furnished him, of serving her father in his extremity, she deemed it only an act of prudence, to avoid encountering the Graf, while he chose to sojourn under the same roof. Besides the motive, we have just instanced, subjects of interest to her had lately evolved, on which she wished to ruminate, in the privacy of her chamber. She entered the room, and closing the door, secured it, by shooting a small bolt into the staple. It was a square apartment, of no great dimensions, opening laterally from the narrow passage, of which we had occasion to make mention, in an earlier chapter. The flooring was of brick, and, as in the other apartments, the walls were whitewashed. There might be observed an aperture in the ceiling, through which, by daylight, the outer crumbling rafters were visible. This made the ever open entrance into that void, or loft, usual in thatched roofs, throughout that region, and generally destined, in the age, to which this history refers, as, indeed, we believe, at present, for implements of business, and the lumber of the family. There was one window, looking out upon those fragments of building, whose neglected state, and rude and solitary appearance, we have elsewhere described. The furniture of this diminutive sleeping-room, as scanty as it was plain, consisted of a sort of meagre bedstead, without curtains, occupying

a narrow alcove; an old oak table, supported on three clumsy legs; and two rickety chairs of withy. Upon the table, lay open a copy of the New Testament, in the Magyar tongue,* first printed, a few years before, at Szigetvar, under the auspices of the philanthropic, and pious Nadaschdy.

There are seasons, when the most thoughtless of the sons, and daughters of Adam, are not sorry to escape from the rush of this empty pageant world, and summoning up, at will, those scenes and moments, which memory pictures on the human heart, as with a sunbeam, haunt the time with faces, long since mouldered away, in the decomposition of the sepulchre, and review incidents, long since elapsed, as they were, in their pristine vividness. There is a melancholy pleasure, in thus placing before us the aggregate of long years, and collecting, in one account, all their endurances, and all their joys; yet we cannot, if the votaries of sorrow, "repair from dark oblivion"† those bereavements and afflictions, which may have cast their shadow over the subsequent pilgrimage of life, without extracting painful auguries of the future, from these sad memories of the past.

> "There is a history in all men's lives,
> Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
> The which observed, a man may prophecy,
> With a near aim, of the main chance of things
> As yet not come to life."

On the other hand, if our thoughts fondly re-invest, with magic light, the brief, but perhaps exquisite enjoyment, which by-gone days afforded, our gladness is dashed with bitterness, when we compare them, with the disappointments of the present. Yet, after all, those tender regrets, proper to the better part of our nature,

* The Bible was not printed *entire*, until 1590, by Sigismund Racoczi, at Vitol.

† Campbell.

are not without their use, to soothe the imagination, and amend the heart. The transition from the past to the present, is itself a startling, indeed, but salutary lesson, which induces serious reflections upon the emptiness of our being here, and its transient tenure. The frail nature of all human ties, . . the evanescence of earthly friendships, and earthly loves, . . the short-datedness of even those finer sympathies, which seem to invest mortality with the privilege of angelic natures, and which lend life its best, though falsest colouring, . . the unreal character, . . the mutability of all that *seems*, on this side of the grave, is thus brought directly home to our consciousness, with due, and impressive contrast. This communion with our bosoms seasons, and softens us, and it is seldom we do not rise, from such meditations, in that chastened mood, which alone is befitting the inheritor of " an enduring substance in futurity."

In some such frame of mind, " her vespers done," did Veronica abstractedly seat herself, at the foot of the couch, preparatory to divesting herself of her day-clothes. The tremulous rush taper, which stood upon the table, seemed to the lonely enthusiast to typify, in the precarious indistinctness of its light, the sinking of her own heart, where hope itself appeared to wane, in the accumulation of her difficulties and grief. Vague glimmerings of, she knew not what, like warning spectres, haunted the time, in which she listlessly prepared for bed. Lost in reverie, her outer garment was laid aside. Mechanically, she unbuttoned the glass beads of her fragrant boddice, and bared the round full beauty of her neck, and shoulders; her voluminous tresses, loosened from all thrall, by the removal of their simple coronal, became suffused over her marmorean loveliness, and, skirting her feet, sported at large below the plaits of her snowy kirtle. Thus, " like a mermaid in sea-weed," she sat, with one fair cheek embedded in her hand, her elbow resting on her knee, pondering, on the vicissitudes of her past

life, and trying her best to extract some consolation, in the prospect of the future. She recalled her mother's presence, and her mother's example, and her loss—"the greatest," says a modern writer, most truly, "which upon entering life, a female can sustain." Weeping, to think how much, at that moment, she needed her fostering care, an additional sense of loneliness came upon Veronica. Presently, her meditations reverted to her imprisoned sire. She could not but be conscious, that, to a certain extent, he had himself drawn down on his head his present misfortunes. This was a consideration, which carried her thoughts still further back, to the period of her childhood—to the tragic day, from which she dated all her father's disasters. It was that, on which he left her, in the chateau of Count Rodna, to accompany into the forest, one, whom he knew to be a murderer, and who, only a few hours afterwards, re-steeped his soul in blood-guiltiness. Then, by no uncommon association of ideas, arose, to her recollection, the dreadful deposit—THE PACKET—the violation of which seemed, as it were, to have antedated the consummation of all, she apprehended. It renewed her spirit's agony, to recal the mysteries of that dreadful night; and a whole host of half-buried terrors were running riot through her brain, when, all at once, her ears seemed to catch the sound of suppressed breathing. Thus abruptly brought back to a sense of present circumstances, she quickly disengaged herself, from her superincumbent tresses, and glanced narrowly round the dusky room. Her eye lit upon nothing unusual, and she faintly smiled at the weakness, which suggested her apprehensions. Having trimmed her little taper, the maiden again prepared for bed.

——— "By degrees,
Her white attire creeps rustling to her knees."

While divesting herself of her remaining *nadrag*, or underdress, the bent of Veronica's thoughts resumed

their former train. She mused on the mysteries of the packet, and on the voice, which had so strangely sounded forth that eventful evening. For the hundredth time, she marvelled within herself, *who* had removed those papers from the chest, beneath the window-seat? who could have divined, their having been there deposited? and who could have had an interest, to purloin them? What, if their contents were, indeed, pregnant with those consequences, which her father anticipated? Into whose possession had the momentous secret fallen? Next, she thought of the disguised stranger, and how, on the eve following her father's arrest, he had visited her, claiming to be the owner of the packet. Hitherto, her ideas had wandered without aim or object, but *here* they seemed rooted, as by some inexplicable spell. She recalled his towering form, wrapped in the Wallachian pelisse. She again trembled, at his threatening and intemperate discourse:—she thrilled beneath the recollection of those accents, which rung on her sense, like the echo, or indistinct memory, of some horrible dream.

Among the shadowy things, her imagination conjured up, there arose a thousand strange, and horrid images of violence and bloodshed; — still, all was so confused, that she could not determine where, or when she before trembled at that voice.—" But ah!" she murmured to herself, as her *nadrag* fell unsupported to her ancles; " tones, such as those, once heard, live in the memory for ever, though, under what circumstances they first impressed me, I cannot call to mind, yet I feel, I would not willingly listen to such again." She ceased, wondering what was the secret spell, that hung over her mind; and striving to shake off a depression, not unmixed with awe, she approached the bed. Here the maiden involuntarily paused, with a misgiving at her heart, as if there were an adder couched between those sheets. Thus, she stood, with no unbecoming feeling of mingled pride, and diffidence; pride, which it was not in her sex not to

entertain,—and diffidence, such as belonged to a child, only consummated, by the superior intelligence of the woman. While, in the genial glow of maiden adolescence, of incipient womanhood, she hesitated, for a few moments, and found in herself an invincible repugnance to concealment, in the bed-clothes, a low suspiration—the slightest ever breathed along the chords of the heart, seemed to melt away on her ear. Already, her one foot was planted on the ticking-sack of loose feathers, which, in those days, formed the sole substitute for every other coverlet. She reverted her head, and casting the volume of her glossy hair backwards, over her alabaster neck and snowy shoulders, paused, panting and dismayed, with her right hand, against her palpitating and still white bosom, and a fair finger sealing her coral lip. In such innocent, and charming attitude, she held her respiration for a while; her sense of the attendant circumstances, of night and solitude, while it aggravated the creative fancy of the maiden, almost too much for sufferance, heightened the trembling grace, .. the exquisite fascination of her posture. — "Methinks," at last, observed the wrapt damsel, in a musing soliloquy; "sweet melody is born nder the moon, this clear night, and the air is full of pathos; 'tis strange, how sad I am, as if a heavy sense of woe to come, weighed, like lead, upon my spirit; but the clinging feeling is that man,—wherefore should the thought of his dark vizor disquiet me so? Why, at this instant, do I feel such intense inquisitiveness about the face, that vizor hid from me? Would that the fancy would pass away! but, even now, that countenance seems glassed in my heart of hearts, however the misty haze of years may have dimmed the reflection. I look there for memory, and, as through a veil, encounter a horrible presentment, like a tenanting spectre, amid a mass of ruins; there throng upon the solitude of my brain, in chequered shadow and light, an incongruous assemblage of wild phantoms; but that

man's red arm, thrust forth between me and happiness, is a part of all. Why these vague terrors and gloomy presages? do they point at death? No, no! and yet, what is it I forbode! Wherefore this deep, dull despondency? what doth it portend? What nameless disquietude, like damp despair, can have gone over my soul, to weigh me down, till the very orisons, I send up yonder, seem beaten back? Dishonour and shame cumber the still air, and sit, like incubus, on their apprehensive, and devoted victim. A cold creeping awe, like the awful whisperings of coming calamity, tingles in my flesh!—ha! who's there?—Silly girl,— twas but your own breathing." —Again!—dear me; I feel, to-night, as if that masked man were lurking near me,—near me,—*yet would be nearer.* Oh! I do believe it were better, than this torture, if he even stood there, *so I might see his face.*"

Again Veronica, unable to overcome her reluctance to get into bed, stepped upon the floor, slid her feet into her yellow slippers, and throwing a light wrapper loosely over her *szoknyaban*, or short under "cutty-sark,"* paced, with unequal steps, round the solitary chamber. Every thing began to take a false colouring, from the morbid condition of her thoughts; the very night-breeze, as it whistled past the casement, had something sinister. "Why," she internally resumed; "do I feel this desolation in my mind?—not lonely, but worse. Why, at this hour, more than yesternight, or any preceding night? Would I could speak to Judith, to break this unnerving silence,—it were some relief. But that I fear to light upon the cardinal's nephew, I'd go and rouse her." In this state of torture, she remained for many minutes, which were long hours, to the apprehension of the maiden. At last, having resolved to brave her weakness, she threw open the casement. The chill breath of the nocturnal wind, wafted coolness into the close chamber, and came freshly over her forehead, with a sense of sympathy, and

* Burns.

companionship. She owned, to use the words of him, whom Sir Walter Scott truly designated "the most imaginative of bards,"

> "It mingled strangely with her fears,
> Yet it felt like a welcoming."*

All was still around, save where the nightingale beguiled the silence, with "liquid notes, that closed the eye of day." The scarcely waning moon diffused her softening radiance, by snatches, upon the wild and dilapidated waste below, kissing, into animation, the repose and solitude of the wreathing blades of unwaving grasses, which sprung up, on all sides, and clad the ruinous precincts with an abundant vest. The ineffable influence of the hour sank down holily, on the maiden's heart, and inspired a strain of meditation, that, like mental music, chimed to a solemner chord, and calmed her feelings to a serener tone. The unswerving stars, studded thick the purple depth of space, and Veronica lifted up her eye, from the scene of rugged desolation, and decay, which told of that mortality and change, which is the irrevocable lot of man, and all his works, to where the high arch of heaven rose, in calm stability, and immutable duration. She slowly raised her eyes, even as her soul might have turned away, from the vicissitudes of time, to the contemplation of eternity. Her thoughts were carried forward from the world of man, its cares, its follies, and its crimes, to hold commune with a being, infinitely good and great. — Προς το αἴδιον εβλεπεν.† . . The hour became religion; and, as she mused, on the future, — on immortality, — and endless rest, the grand, solemn stillness of night, came, replete, with a power to absorb, if not cheer, her desolation. She continued watching the delicately tinted vapours, every now and then crossing the moon's orbit, sometimes wholly eclipsing her light, and occasionally melting in her radiance, until

* Coleridge. † Plato.

a sensation of numbness and cold, induced her to think of closing the casement. Nevertheless, during many minutes afterwards, it remained as it was,; for still there lingered, in her mind, a strong, but unaccountable repugnance, to enclosing herself anew in that room, and so, as it were, shutting herself out, from the protecting eyes of Heaven. Determined, however, to master this inward reluctance, which she could neither readily combat, nor assign any rational cause for, she stretched out her hand, to reach the catch of the casement, but again, her ear fancied a sudden, and indistinct rustling, somewhere near her. She instinctively listened, and she could not, a second time, believe it imaginary ; — the uplifted hand fell, nerveless, by her side, and, for a minute, she feared to turn her head.

At length, summoning all her courage, she looked round, but saw nothing, to warrant her apprehensions. " I am but a fool," she murmured, indignant at herself, for what she deemed most inexcusable weakness. She was again on the point of closing the casement, when, gazing out into the moonlight, she discerned, distinctly, a dark object emerge, like a shadow, from behind one of the mouldering tenements of the demesne. Her breath, indeed, grew a little thick, but the figure fascinated her gaze, beyond the power of withdrawal. It paused for a second, and then passed stealthily athwart the dew-spangled enclosure, here and there bounded by a broken, but still lofty wall. Having reached this barrier, the figure carefully removed some rampant shrubs, and, taking out certain large, square, loose stones, showed a little postern door, through which he made his exit. The incident was, by no means, adapted to calm her perturbed imagination, nor could she conjecture, what inducement any person had to haunt those premises, at that hour of the night. Deeming, however, all other apprehensions to be purely ideal, she instantly shut, and secured the window. This occupation of a minute was

no sooner over, than there again arose a stifling sensation at her heart, as if her soul shrunk at, and grappled with, some strange, unimaginable presentiment. She strove, in vain, to grasp its precise nature, for, though it implied that something terrible was, even now, on the eve of accomplishment, *what* her fears pointed at, was not tangible to her apprehension.

In this state of hesitancy, she lay back in her chair for several minutes, with her eyes partially closed, undetermined how to act, half ashamed of her chimerical fears, but finding it impossible, in spite of her every effort, to argue herself into tranquillity. Her rapt thoughts, meanwhile, involuntarily fell into their former train; and the complicated horrors of that night, when the invisible voice vibrated at her elbow, and her eye first glanced at those gouts of blood, which inhibited the opening of the packet, gathered, in all their inscrutable mysteriousness, on her imagination. Gradually, a confused reverie invaded her faculties, the objects around became, less and less, distinct, till, in an imbecile mood of mingled fact and fiction, with an oppression brooding on her heart, like a sense of guilt, Veronica came to doze upon that seat. She slept, indeed, but such sleep was terrible. Her waking sensations accompanied her, with fantastic fidelity, into the land of visions, and, scattered and split, into a thousand indistinct reminiscences, sunk, with awful pressure, on her mind, as if she were a predoomed victim. Intense suffering, almost too mighty for endurance, and which, from some peculiar, and inscrutable cause, might, not unaptly, be termed intuitive remorse, was evidenced in the spasmodic heavings of her chest. Her breath came and went, in deep-fetched, and convulsive sobs, and her indefinable emotions seemed to impel the starting tear, and thrill the creeping vein. More than once, and whether she were sleeping or awake, she scarcely knew, she thought, she felt the slow movement of death-cold hand, over her face and neck, and

could distinguish its contact to that urn of alabaster, where the impatient heart seemed struggling for life. A thousand hideous feelings of abandonment beleaguered her. She instinctively shuddered. Her blood curdled, for the manual pressure on her panting breast resembled not the actual touch of mortality. The groping hand, whose palpable chillness, as it passed gently to and fro over the quivering flesh, conveyed a horrid impression of its reality, was, at length, suddenly withdrawn, and the indescribable terror, associated with the remembrance of the packet, transferred itself to Veronica's sleeping fancies, but, mingled with intolerable mental anxiety, and a loathing of every fibre of her body, at some fate or crisis, which was actually impending, without her having the power to avert it.

> " For all seemed guilt, remorse, or woe,
> Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame."*

Soon, the vague, and well-nigh insupportable incubus, " without form and void," beneath whose leaden power, her energies unconsciously succumbed, clothed itself in the caverns of memory, and assumed a more defined, but not less dreadful character. She thought, that she was a child once more, and, owing to an uncontroulable impulse, that she was again looking through a crevice, in some apartment, as had happened to be her lot, many years before, in the chateau of Count Rodna. However, with the usual incoherence of dreams, she had no consciousness of where she was — the circumstance being the simple impulse of memory in her slumber, *if, indeed, slumber it were*. Then, as at present, she was clad only in her night robe. There chanced, however, this trifling variation ; — the gap, or interstice, through which she *now* dreamed, she gazed, was not placed in the wainscot, but OVER-HEAD, and consisted of an OPEN TRAP-DOOR

* Coleridge.

wrought, *in the cieling* of the room, where she imagined herself. Nevertheless, by the magic of dreams, she retraced, with all the force of reality, the fearful scene which her father, and the assassin, enacted on that memorable occasion. The incitement to murder, .. the upbraiding, .. the temptation recurred to her memory, with the vividness of recent occurrence. Then she beheld the villain draw the parchment from his vest, and hold it before the eyes of Eissenburg, and she could read the words, which were the language of the script of blood, found on her father's hearth — "WOULD YOU DESTROY BODY AND SOUL? — OFFICIOUS FOOL! OPEN THE DEPOSIT, CONFIDED TO YOU, AT YOUR PERIL!" and, immediately, by a rapid transition, natural to dreams, she thought, she rested upon the window-seat, beneath which, Hubert had cast the writings of the packet. There she sat, and, right before her, stood a tall figure, and it was the Wallachian stranger, masked and silent. Fearfully she gazed upon him, and then said aloud, "What would you have?"—and he fixed his dark eyes upon her earnestly, and made answer, "I will have thee, Veronica of Eissenburg, for my wedded wife;"—and she seemed, to herself, to reply,—"thinkest thou, I will marry a man, whose face I know not;"—and he said, "Over the hills, maiden, I have a home for thee; come, and we'll rest us on the way, i' the emerald spots, by quiet fountains; so come, with me, to where the curtained encampment of my fathers' is set up, and then, if thou still wishest it, thou shalt view my face;—shall we not go together?"—But she demurred, saying, "Only show me thy countenance, and do with me according to thy pleasure, for I must e'en submit." Instantly she felt, as if his powerful hands were grasping her choking throat, and that, holding her roughly to him, he dragged her along. All resistance seemed in vain; in spite of her incessant struggles, and abortive attempts to shriek, she could neither successfully oppose, nor es-

cape the convulsive embrace, that strained her to his breast. A mixed sensation, made up of ill defined horror, and excruciating fear, froze her inmost soul:—it was a period of strange, and intolerable consciousness; she having an obscure conception, all the while, that, though she dreamt, her dream was the type of some revolting reality. Then ensued the worst moment of her nightmare, in which she thought, she was being whirled away, still locked in the arms of the masked stranger, through illimitable space, and that clouds, and vapours were rolling, before her dizzy eyes; and, at length, that a paroxysm of pain and terror, suspended her faculties, and, in that pang, *she dreamed*, that she swooned away.

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The vision now changed its every characteristic. She was strolling on the pebbly banks of the Olt, whose languid waters, slow and silently, slide away, beneath the thick growth of fainting rushes, like conscious guilt. By her side was a noble youth, and however evanescent the circumstances, which were connected with his remembrance, the knowledge of *who* was her companion, insensibly rose within her. He was that boy, whom she once beheld in her childhood, only for a few hours, on the frightful evening, we commemorated, in the chateau of Count Rodna. The face and form were the same, and yet again, how different! All the characteristics which distinguished the beautiful boy were developed, into manly comeliness and grace. Veronica gazed entranced, and the bright false imagination of sleep gilded those minutes of delusion, with a touch of bliss, that scarcely any waking reality of joy might parallel. She dreamed the youth told her, with many honeyed words, that he loved her; and she listened to the flattering tale, as young maids will listen, when their hearts are in the case; that is, she felt she blushed, and so averted her head, and was

silent. Suddenly, just as she thought that he found favour in her sight, and that she had gathered courage to tell him as much,* her hand was snatched, from the close clip of her gallant, and on looking up, she received a shock, that thrilled through all her nerves. Her young companion, with that facility of transformation, incident to dreams, had changed into the tall figure of a monk, clothed in the habiliments of his order, having an immense leaden crucifix, suspended from his girdle; and she thought he cried out to her, in a fierce tone—"Hope not, fair heretic, to ascend a throne, over the ruins of my child's fortunes!" and she shook to hear him; when straightwise there approached a third person, in whom she again recognised the masked Wallachian, and a war of words arose, between him and the monk, about what she knew not; but at the close, she lost sight of the ecclesiastic, and was left on the fringed bank of the rivulet, alone, with the vizored stranger; and then, she dreamed, the Olah led her on a long day's journey, and they traversed hills and valleys, and penetrated forests, that seemed interminable; until, at last, as the sun was going down, they entered upon a vast unbroken *volyy*, or plain, where were spread, afar to the right and left, innumerable encampments, gay with twinkling pennons, and banners, and bandrols, darkening the sunshine, and streaming among the acacia branches, by which they were mostly overhung. Around and about, apparelled in scanty raiment, of the most showy colours, was a concourse of strange people, male and female, in festive groups; whilst the tabor and dudelsack filled the air, with appropriate inspiration. A drove of mules and asses, many laden with cumbrous packages, and the rest browsing at large, filled up the verdant slopes in the background; whilst in the midst of this gaudy metropolis, though far apart, and high above

* "I had begun to dare
The telling how I loved h m '—MILMAN.

the common level, the lofty ensigns of a tent rose up, into the air, like the minarets of a palace, gilded by the horizontal rays. The voluminous vestments, of which the canopy was composed, were of Indian cloth, and magnificent beyond all compare. Through the entrance of this stately *alfaneque*, she dreamt, that the Wallachian passed, beckoning her to follow. She proceeded to draw aside the flapping drapery, when, behold! just as she penetrated the inner muslin awnings, in the twinkling of an eye, instead of finding herself under the canopy, she conceived, that she was standing in an immense cave, which, with intuitive recollection, she knew to be the same, whither she had been transported by the gipsy hag, in her early childhood; and, seated at the further end of this cave, was *that Boszorkany*, who, holding, in her long skeleton fingers, a golden crown, lifted up her voice, at the sight of Veronica, "Welcome, royal lady!" she exclaimed, "receive, at my son's hands, the regalia of St. Stephen:" and then, she thought, the Wallachian, having taken the crown, from the hold of the sorceress, directly advanced, to where she was stationed, and would have presented her with the sacred gift, but the dreaming maid drew back, and, falling upon one knee, the thought which was uppermost in her mind, rushed, involuntarily, to her lips,—she said, or seemed to herself to say,—"I only accept, sir stranger, the splendid offering, provided you will remove your mask;" and he made answer, "then so be it. Arise, fair daughter of Eissenburg, and behold!" and he raised his hand to his vizor, and she thought she did arise, whilst an intense feeling of curiosity came over her, and, in the awful suspense, and anxiety of that moment, she opened her eyes.

It was gradually, that Veronica,

"Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,"*

broke the bounds, which divide slumber from consciousness, and freed her spirit, from the prison of

* Adonais.

sleep. Very slowly she came to recollect, how, and where her somnolency first stole over her. Rapidly changing her position, she looked around, with a gaze of bewilderment; then, as her vision strengthened, memory began to work,—her beautiful breast heaved, she gasped for breath, and sat up erect, in her uncurtained bed, bathed in a dew of vague, wildering terror. The taper was dying in the chimney, and the last flicker of its expiring light played upon the staring visages of two human creatures, standing in front of her couch; the same, that had just appeared to her, in the last chimera of her dream. There was stationed the tall, meagre hag, presenting the like aspect, and clothed in the same uncouth habiliments, as the abstraction of her *alom** had pictured; and, nearer yet, stood the stately form of the Wallachian, AND THE MASK WAS OFF. Veronica felt her senses reeling, under the horrid excitement; she dashed her little palm rapidly, and tremblingly across her brow — was she sane? or,—again her eyes strained strongly towards *his face*, and the sluices of memory were broken up, and poured, in a full flood of horror, from her heart to her brain. She beheld the same handsome features, which, for the only time in her life, she had caught sight of, through the chink in the wainscot of Count Rodna's chateau; she, at once discovered the Wallachian chief to be no other, than that execrable assassin. Being abruptly roused from her distempered dream, only to have her sight blasted, by the actual presence, in her very bed-chamber, of the abhorred perpetrator of those detested tragedies, down whose wild habiliments, even now, trickled a streamlet of blood; it was no wonder, she felt her heart's current rapidly failing, through all its arteries. A deadly mist came over her eyes; the presentment became too terrible. "Great God! my dream! and *I in bed!*" she shrinkingly exclaimed; and the next minute went off into insensibility.

* Alom; dream.

Let us beat back a few pages. Perhaps, the reader may not have forgotten, that one of the twain, who were in dark conference, in the adjoining chamber, rushed out, on hearing a heavy tread proceed, from Veronica's sleeping apartment. This person was no other, than our ancient acquaintance Judith, who halted for an instant, before she could discern any object. At length, however, the light of a taper fell upon the figure of a man, wrapped, from head to foot, in a capacious mantle; he was standing in the door-way of the damsel's bed-room.

"Eternal infamy! whence came you?" demanded the housekeeper.

The other, whom we have elsewhere denominated the Wallachian, stared in surprise. "Thence," he replied, pushing back the chamber door, and at the same time, perhaps, by way of clearing the decks for action, putting the light upon the paved flooring: "Ha! infamous villain!" rejoined Judith, springing towards the amazed intruder, with an impetus, that made the walls shake again, and seizing him, by the upper cape of his pelisse.

The stranger turned fiercely upon her: "Here's a fury," he exclaimed, "by hell! she'll throttle me,—hold off your hands, you harridon, or I'll ——"

The aggressor, however, with a firm, muscular, and nervous gripe, clung to his throat and breast.

"Cease! art thou mad?" exclaimed the stranger, his lip quivering with anger, at the assault. "I will not be so hugged. Nay, then," he added, fixing a demoniac, yet contemptuous glance on the housekeeper, whilst he forcibly loosened his right arm, preparatory to drawing his weapon: "Thus, I cut the connection," and in less time than is filled by the telling, the keen poignard of the Wallachian, aimed with the utmost accuracy, and strength of arm, pierced the heart of Judith, who, with a loud moan, fell bathed in her blood, at the other's feet.

At this instant, the same individual, who, a short while

before, had been holding a dialogue, with Judith, in the next apartment, made his appearance, and on perceiving the housekeeper, stretched upon the earth, uttered an exclamation—"Good God! Count Ragotzy," he cried, "why have you done this?"

"To save myself from being strangled, by those amazonian talons," replied the other drily.

"My lord, your passion has undone the labour of years,—you have slain our chiefest witness."

"How so, Swartz?" said the count, "wherein would that old crone prove a witness?"

"That crone," replied Swartz, "is the very man, whom *he* hired to carry off the Princess Beatrice, from Pereny."

"Oh! then, 'tis none of the *beau sexe* after all,—that accounts for the strength of those fangs," said Ragotzy.

"Nay, my lord," resumed Swartz; "do you not perceive, by this unlucky chance, the evidence, that would bring home the abduction of the princess, falls to the ground."

"Hark, thee, sir keeper," replied Ragotzy; "you are continually, I have remarked, for some reason or other, harping on the name of the Princess Beatrice—there, you start, and change colour!"

A perturbed expression did, indeed, for a moment, pass over the sinister countenance of Swartz; however, he clinched his teeth, and made no reply.

"Now," continued the count, "if you'd have me join in your projects, mention the sister of dead Zapola no more,—what thou art drilling thy fertile brains about, passes my conception. Be assured, I want no other evidence, than what will suffice to establish the title of the daughter of Eissenburg; therein, both my personal ambition, and my revenge on *him*, will be amply gratified; and to tell you a truth, which I've only learned myself within this hour,—my love also. But how comes it our mother have not yet arrived? I expected her ere this."

" I left her at the base of the precipice," said Swartz, " with four of the troop. She is on a visit to the vaults, and I hied hither, in the hopes of prevailing, on the man you have slain, to leave Hermanstadt, under our escort. But yourself, my lord, where have you lain ensconced all the while ?"

" Over head with the rats, till lately," answered Ragotzy.

" How ?—and the lady ?" inquired Swartz, casting a penetrating glance, upon the count.

" Is in bed, my good catechiser," said the other, without a more direct reply, meeting his associate's look, with a peculiar smile,—*Illa nisi in lecto*,—and he added, after a pause, " you know, that's a rule *nisi*, laid down by an authority."

In saying these words, a remarkable expression gleamed across the features of the Cygani, which Swartz knew not how to construe. " My lord," he began—

" Nay, God-a-mercy," interrupted the Cygani, " never raise thine eyes to Heaven. She hath hitherto slept, or —— been as tranquil—"

" Alaric, is every thing in readiness ?" exclaimed the energetic voice of Unna, as she strode through the kitchen, to the spot, where Ragotzy and Swartz were talking.

" Mother, the lady sleeps," said Ragotzy.

" How ? have you not prepared her for her journey ?" asked Unna, with some surprise.

" Why, she looks so beautiful in repose," replied Ragotzy, while a slight smile was visible, at the corners of his mouth, " that methought it were a pity to spoil the picture of her rest."

" She should not have been suffered to retire to her couch at all," said Unna, in a tone of asperity; " but which is the room ?"

" To the right," answered the other; " I'll follow you, for I wish to see those sapphire orbs unclose. Swartz,

your company can be dispensed with ;" and Count Ragotzy and Unna, passed into the chamber of the unprotected daughter of Eissenburg. They planted themselves, for a moment, at the foot of the couch, to gaze upon their victim, where supine she lay —

> " Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
> As if a rose should shut and be a bud again."*

" She is fast, methinks," said Unna.

" Ay, as oblivion," returned her son.

In all the inborn, and unstudied grace of youthful innocence, slumbered the lovely girl, like the downy cygnet, nestling in a close covert, made up of matted rushes, and her " own beauties." But it might be easily seen, that the callow fowl is just now ruffled, by some internal emotion,—her dishevelled tresses went streaming, like light, over the pillow and rug,—one waxen rounded arm hangs listless, without the bed clothes,—her fair cheek is buried in the palm of her left hand, whilst on the other cheek, like a poplar leaf in autumn, that will redden and turn pale alternately, as the wind sighs, there quivered that false, and spectral hectic, which is commonly, at least as symptomatic of the mind's fever, as of the body's. A single and arrowy vein, marked distinctly on the marble whiteness of her skin, meandered, like the tendril of a vine, over her temple,—her breathing was a gentle suspiration, though only obtained in snatches—

> " And there she lay, as innocent and mild,
> As daisy born in dew."†

" Rise, daughter of Eissenburg!" cried Count Ragotzy, at length.

Veronica, after a succession of fitful sobs, slowly

* Keats. † Allan Cunningham.

opened her eyes, and, as we have already told, shortly after went off into convulsions.

" Alaric," said Unna, " what's now to be done ?"

" There is nothing for it," said her hopeful son, " but to bear her off, in her present oblivious condition. Do you officiate, and clothe her warmly ; mind me, the damsel will be as light as a dove, in the arms of her bridegroom : but I will leave you, for I would change a word with that unfathomable volunteer of ours, in the next chamber."

" Unfathomable, and perchance false !" muttered Unna. She paused, in evident constraint, and her bold, bad son, approaching the bed-head, exclaimed —

" Ah ! little think the sons of Erdély, to what strait, at this hour, their rightful sovereign is reduced."

" Their future queen, you should rather say," observed the *Boszorkany*, in a low voice, " but, I bid you mark me, *not* at this hour, their rightful sovereign."

" I apprehend you not," said Ragotzy ; " and I wish to God, you would cease to buzz into my ears your vatticinal deceptions."

Unna moved away a single step, and rather muttered, than said distinctly, " Perhaps, 'tis as well, thou dost not apprehend me." Then, a dark shade of portentous meaning crossed the hag's wrinkled brow, as, in a louder voice, she added, " Thou knowest not the power of fate, that power the heavens obey ; and 'tis as well, or — but art thou nailed there, — we are a loitering."

Count Ragotzy's dark eye still lingered on the marbly face of the unconscious Veronica, with an expression, that it might be difficult to define. " A coronet were the only tire, meet for that brow," he murmured, " and so, 'tis well I am provided. In truth, good mother," he proceeded, raising himself from his bent position, " 'tis an exquisite wench, though somewhat of the deadest, and her exuberant lips break out in odours, such as never fail red roses, when they die. But you

say rightly, we loiter ;" and he made towards the door. " Our fleet steeds," he added, turning his head, " will have to make up for lost time, and travel as swift, I fancy, as any sailing cloud that cuts the empty air; yet not," he muttered to himself, in a lower tone, as he closed the door behind him, " not, with the speed of human thoughts, stung to action ' by the snake memory.' "*

That body, stretched out across his path, and weltering in the gushing purple of life, over which, already apparently a corpse, Count Ragotzy had to step, might have suggested to him a yet more awful similitude ; but, notwithstanding that the education, with which Father Dominick had enriched his mind, tended to quicken, and cultivate his spontaneous inclination to such sort of associations and resemblances, the apposite consideration of their intended rate of progress, having been far exceeded, by the swift flight of the liberated soul, from time to eternity, did not seem to strike the accomplished homicide. Fleshed in murder, he knew remorse only by name; and, probably, he had small faith, either in his own, or his victim's immortality.

The gipsy hordes, on their first appearance on the European stage, professed uncommon sanctity, under the assumed character of Christian pilgrims. They affected the Greek worship, but, whether originally, or at any later epoch, they had any intelligible notion of the essential points of our religion, much less, were imbued with its spirit, may reasonably admit of doubt ; at least, it is certain, the particular race, we have to deal with, at the date of our history, are not to be looked upon, as much differing from confirmed atheists.

Thus Ragotzy bestrode his prostrate antagonist, with callous indifference, coolly taking the necessary pre-

* Adonais.

caution to prevent himself from stumbling over the carcase.

Νυκτος—Αιθηρτε και 'Ημερα εξεγενοντο.—Hesiod.

However repeatedly the phenomenon of sunrise has been celebrated, in language "married to immortal verse," the topic itself will continue inexhaustible, so long as the lover of Nature delights to contemplate the level planet, slowly uncoiling, like a sparkling serpent, "mid all his cresting clouds and flashing hues," and mark him, trailing floods of glory on his upward path, through the illimitable ether.

Not many hours had elapsed, after those horrible passages, concluding in the abduction of Veronica, which we have detailed above, when the cock had crown, and the city of Hermanstadt, welled in a golden flood of dewy light, awoke to all the fears and excitement, incident to another to-morrow. To such as uprose to the business of that morrow, duly refreshed and invigorated, by the "oblivious antidote" of the preceding night, there was something genial and soothing to the senses, in the bracing atmosphere, and the clear, cloudless skies, and the voice of birds, thrilling their symphonious matins, and the cool gale, redolent of the *milles fleurs*, that make up that natural bouquet, which leaves one sense, at least, no reason to regret the "loss of Eden," but to the thousands, and tens of thousands, who, face to face, met that chilly dawn, as it came blushing, above the chimney tops, reeking from the impure, or riotous orgies of the sensual man ; or to the choice few, jaded with their prolonged hesternal commerce with the Heliconian nymphs,.. unto every one, whose yesterday has no morrow, there was an eloquent contrast, in the freshness of the hour, which sunk, with solemn and silent earnestness, over the heart ; and the sensation of that span of time might anticipate an age of riot, revelled out, and thoughts, that

waste us to our graves, conveying a lesson, beyond the reach of all the homilies and catechisings, ever spoken, or recorded, from Jacob's death-bed, downwards. If ever virtue could hope, of its own strength, to overmaster its spell, it is in the minute, when the young Aurora blushes the day-break from her cheeks. What pity, that minute is so brief! I verily believe, if the genius of our hour-glass would daily, during the access of such soft religious tenderness, hold still his ruthless hand, and cease, were it only "while the Leviathan could swim a league," to measure out his sands, the very operatives of the church would shortly find their profession a sinecure; and so, in the spirit of the age, be cashiered. Few of our fair readers, we dare say, will understand all this jargon, however our brown ones might have done so "in their hot youth, when George the Third was king."

But, let us return, where we left the sun, like a prodigal, showering rays of gold on the roofs and rafters of Hermanstadt, and tipping, with deeper blushes, the kindling cheeks of conscious-parting lovers, and heightening the naughty splendour of their eyes, guiltless of a night's rest. By the way, the sun, who is an early riser, must witness some odd scenes now and then, though much, as is best fitting, is left to the imagination. Good love, every body knows, cannot abide day-light;—but the moon!—Oh Lord! tis well for her, she is so chaste, as is given out, or she could never go through the thousandth part of the "indecorums of her witching hour," and then to be put to the blush for so many consecutive nights, unless, indeed, that she be so *usé* by this time to the romance of lovers, that "kissing goes for nothing." Her early quarters, however, must have put her modesty to a severe trial. Now, the sun, though they may receive him differently, "shakes day about,"* impartially, upon

* Lord Falkland.

the poor man's cottage, and the king's palace.* And among other humble domes, which his first equal horizontal ray, visited on the morning, following the events just narrated, was that of Hubert; beneath the front abutment of whose domicile, stood, for a second of time, two individuals, inhaling the delicious freshness of the breeze of dawn. We need scarcely say, that neither of these was the *hareschina*,† or his daughter: both of whom were absent. The neighbouring convent rung forth a matin peal, that broke the serried armament of mist and vapour overhead, as one of these twain, a female, whose conventual stole of dark serge, snowy capulary, and *rosenkranz*, or rosary of coral, indicated a sister of the order of charity, sent forth a single quick, and searching glance, beyond the pentice. The other, *invitus invitam*,‡ was on the point of dismissing her. Waving her tiny hand to her companion, "the pensive nun, devout and pure,"§ shot, with the bound of an antelope, a crossing not twenty paces distant, and was out of sight that same instant. The flitting shape seemed to melt away, like the painted iris, in the tender rays of morning; or like the lightning, "which doth cease to be, ere one can say it lightens." For a moment, the other lingered, and the loose points of his costume fluttered, in the draught of the light morning air,—then turning within, he reclosed the door, and was in the act of passing, through the dusky apartment, when a bright line of light, that slanted through a crevice of the darkened casement, coinciding with a track of blood, along the brick pavement, attracted his eye, and an audible moan, as of one in pain, simul-

* "The self-same sun, that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike."—SHAKESPEARE.

† Hareschina; head of the family.

‡ Suetonius.—The pointed brevity of the phrase might, however, well be mistaken for that of Tacitus.

§ Milton.

taneously drew his attention. He looked around him, and his visual orb, encountered with difficulty, in the dim half light, that filled every part of the room, excepting where that ray happened to be shot, the ghastly form of the housekeeper, evidently near her end, stretched on the window seat. As quick as thought, he was by her side.

" Good God! what means this?" he exclaimed, leaning over the expiring form; " you bleed!"

" I have not an hour to live," was the response, delivered in feeble accents: " Yet, your coming gives me hopes, that, with the blessing of God, my murder may yet be avenged."

" Let me fly for aid," cried Maximilian.

" 'Tis too late," said the other; " I've staunched my wound myself,—listen to me." She then proceeded to relate the circumstance, which led her to attack Count Ragotzy, and its results. The speaker thus concluded: " They bore off the Lady Veronica, leaving me (for I had swooned away) for dead."

" Holy Saint Mary! have I then lost the girl, after all?" passionately broke in Maximilian.

" I know not your meaning," resumed the housekeeper; " after their departure, I would have requested your assistance, had not the door of the room, you slept in, been fastened on the inside. Disappointed of all aid, I crawled hither to die; but say, as thou art a Christian and a knight, wilt thou oblige a dying man?"

" Man!" repeated the astonished hearer.

" Even so, you see before you, that hapless sentry, of whom I spake yesterday." Maximilian recoiled several paces.—" Mark me," exclaimed the bleeding man; " if thou aspirest to the hand of the maiden, who lately dwelt beneath this roof, release her father, by the means thou hintedst at, when we last conferred."

" It shall be effected," replied Maximilian, eagerly.

" But, unless you set about it instantly," faintly mur-

mured the dying stranger; "you will be too late. You will find woman's gear, in a recess in the kitchen, as you enter to the right; the which, having assumed, envelope yourself in the loose pelisse, that you will perceive hanging over the pallet." Maximilian was hurrying away, to obey these notable directions, when the other's voice called him back:—"stay," said he, making an effort to rise, which proved abortive; "a strong pull will sever these locks, that tangle down the side of my face."—Maximilian, as directed, removed the disguise. The close brown hair, that was brought to view, had the effect of deducting nearly twenty years, from the apparent age of the assassinated man. "Now, be quick, and decked with these silvery hairs, you will defy detection. Would I knew his designation, of whom I had them!" Maximilian retired to the kitchen, to accommodate his difficult habiliments to his refined taste, in matters of costume.

"So," thought our gallant, as he suspended the aprons behind, and in front, *à la mode de Wallachia*. "I must first liberate the guard captain from prison, and so found a claim to his daughter's everlasting gratitude, and then I can devise what is next to be done,—out upon this skirt. I wish I could arrange it in a more succinct form, about the ancles. So, I see, I must raise the *opintchens*. Doubtless, her father ——; there, if I have not hit it to a fraction,—will soon discover where the rascals have ——, 'tis a horrid unbecoming cut, this pelisse ——, bestowed her. They cannot, I think, have carried her off to any distance ——; how coarse, compared to the *gaba* of the magyari!—and, if I have luck enough to be the knight errant that is fated to ——, what a confounded greasy turban!—— to rescue her,—faugh! After having freed her father, why I shall have laid my springes so cunningly, that were her heart cased in ribs of ice, the furnace of my sighs would thaw through all, and melt her to my wishes, ('tis well though, she wont have to see me, in these venerable locks), she'll be the daintiest leman in all Erdély. But that poor man will grow im-

patient. Why such a harlequinade as this is to stand, in stead of a priest, to shrive him, passes my wits; but 'tis enough, his fantasy falls in with my own humours." With these ideas passing through his mind, the young graf, having adjusted his bizarre attire to his taste, returned to the front apartment, and received directions, from the visibly declining sufferer, how, in the character of Hubert's domestic, to obtain admittance to his cell.

"When you see him," said the man; and his voice grew feebler as he spoke, "tell him of the abduction of his daughter; and bid him, on his deliverance, instantly to speed hither, for that I would wish, with my dying breath, to inform him of a matter, that nearly touches him. Yet stay, lest, on his arrival, he find that death hath displaced life, in this poor tenement. I'd better, while I have voice —;" he hesitated, and then, with inquiring, though glazed eye, added, "Ah! art thou not—didst thou not boast, erewhiles, thou wert—the kinsman of Martinuzzi?"

"I have the honour," replied the graf.

"Then, alas! I must leave the rest unsaid; but my breath fails—fly,—and my last benizon for the service."

Maximilian was already at the door, but there he paused. "If," said he, reverting his head, "the guard-captain ask, who, shall I say, wishes to see him?"

For a moment, the other did not answer. "Albert," he, at length, faintly uttered; "his lost Albert—his brother!"

"Brother!" responded Maximilian: "knew he that, in that menial garb?"

"Never," interrupted Albert of Eissenburg, in a broken tone; "but haste, or—"

The dying man sunk back, in the stern expectation of approaching death, which Maximilian left him to contemplate; and another minute, saw our "gallant, gay Lothario," trudging through the still silent street, with the Kosorian under his arm, in the attractive guise of maid-of-all-work, to Hubert, of the guard.

MANUSCRIPT XVI.

"A state can never arrive to its period, in a more deplorable crisis, than when some prince lies hovering, like a vulture, to dismember its carcase, by which means it becomes only an acquisition to some mighty monarchy, without hopes of a resurrection."

SWIFT.

"Digné de l être, il ne manque à vous qu'un peu d'amour pour elle meme, pour une vie glorieuse à laquelle la vie detant de milliers d'hommes est attachée."

CREBILLON, *Discours Academ.*

LEAVING the Count Pereny to pick his way, as he best might, to the citadel of Hermanstadt, we shall endeavour to transport the reader, to the presence of the lord cardinal, taking the critical minute, when we dropped the secretary of the Marquis de Piddena, at the door of the audience-closet, as recorded, towards the close of one of our earlier chapters.

The apartment into which Ferraro, almost directly, found himself marshalled, by an officer of the household, was one of fair dimensions, and decorated, according to the fashion of the age, and the taste of Martinuzzi. It was wainscotted with oak, the raised and massy pannels of which, were highly polished, and richly and elaborately carved, as were likewise the compartments of the ceilings, which were of deep pannel-work, of the same material; the otherwise bare, and monoto-

nous appearance of the walls, was relieved, at intervals, by several paintings in gilded frames, the choice productions of Ambrogiotto, and other masters of Italy. The inside of three doors, which let into the apartment, were clothed, or rather mantled, with drapery of crimson velvet, deeply fringed with gold, and looped back, with a massive cord and tassels. The window-hangings, of the same rich fabric, corresponded. The soft, thick, wool covering of the floor, was composed of embroidered foot cloth, of the most perfect workmanship, from the looms, and hands of the maidens of Astrachan. The few couches and chairs, in this apartment, were cushioned with damask, and ornamented with needle-work. In a small recess, which constituted the oratory of the cardinal, was disposed a splendid hassock, before a missal and breviary, gorgeously illuminated. In the same niche, beside an ewer of holy water, stood a crucifix, whose burnished gold, wrought with uncommon skill, was inlaid with various precious stones. Seated at the further end of this council-room, on a chair of state, richly embossed, and raised above the rest of the floor, was the cardinal himself,..but not alone.

Near him stood a man, whose garb and appearance attracted the eyes of Ferraro, and who would seem to deserve from us particular notice. This person was apparently past the meridian of life, and his scarred features, and set martial air, were indicative of his profession. His personal equipments enabled Ferraro to ascertain the capacity, in which he served. He was a member of that formidable troop, which had lately been organised, by the regent of Hungary, for the purposes of national defence. The emperor himself had set the example of the institution of a body of mercenaries, in lieu of the precarious service of feudal levies, and Martinuzzi's sagacity early discerned the many advantages, that would accrue to Hungary, from the adoption of a similar measure. The man, now closeted with the cardinal, wore the

habit of a subaltern officer of the national troop. His Herculean frame appeared modelled on purpose, to support the ponderous hauberk, gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets of bright steel, that protected his person. A massive iron cassinet, crested with a plume of horse-hair, which he at present held in his hand, commonly weighed upon his temples, and, rivetting closely to the ears and head, fastened under the chin. A long, two-handed spear, was suspended, from his neck, in a baldric: a dagger, or dirk, hung at his right side. Although the generic cast, superinduced upon the natural disposition, by his professional pursuits, was so strongly stamped on the man's physiognomy, his countenance, likewise, acknowledged a distinct, and marked expression, which was neither so defined, nor, perhaps, altogether so honourable to his character. The small, grey eyes, almost hidden, from the uncommon depth, at which they were set, in the head, and by the projection of the thick, grizzled eyebrows, were not perfectly in keeping, with his martial front; neither did their language accord, with so much of the contour of his other features, as the rivettings, and clashings of the morion, along the sides of his visage, usually permitted to be seen. There obviously lurked a cunning, and sinister purpose, in the quick, inquisitive glance, which, at intervals, he would cast abroad from the deep recess, immediately over the projecting cheek-bone, and which appeared still more equivocal, when he would turn his light eye back on itself, as if to inquire of his subtle spirit its latent imaginings, when, as it were, his mind would hold commune with its own intimations, and "thick coming fancies." Even after a more close observation of his face, little of principle, judicious conduct, or ordinary prudence, could be traced in its deep, and distorted lines. He looked a man, who, in the words of the prophet, was not even "wise to do evil, and to do good he had no knowledge." A wavering of purpose, an instability of tem-

per, an aptitude to yield to sudden impulse, without adequate motive, might, perhaps, be read in his unsteady gaze, and in the anxious, though subdued, expression of his contracted brow. It is likely, a skilful disciple of Lavater might pronounce him rather a weak, than a wicked man, and there was, undoubtedly, a deal of natural benevolence conspicuous, in the lower, and subordinate lineaments of his face, which corrected, in a great measure, or rather contradicted, the subtlety, and, perhaps, we might add, the ferocity of his other features. He appeared, at first sight, to exceed the middle period of life, for his locks were chequered, by a few grizzled hairs; but more accurate observation, might be inclined to attribute the dust of silver, shed upon his brow, to the persecuting hand of inauspicious sorrow, rather than to the operation of age.

These minute points of physiognomy, and martial garniture, it is likely, would have escaped the notice of the dispirited young secretary, but there appeared, as Ferraro entered the apartment, something so equivocal, in the attitude of the soldier, that he could not help feeling a degree of wonder, at witnessing so incongruous, however picturesque, an exhibition, in that residence, and in such a presence. The man stood by the side of the regent's chair; his one foot was advanced forwards; his left hand, in which he held his morion, lay against his breast, but his right arm was stretched forth, with his forefinger, pointing, earnestly, towards the opposite wall.

The observation of Ferraro, however, quickly became transferred, from the finger of the subaltern, to be rivetted on the spectacle of Martinuzzi himself. The dress of the cardinal was an episcopal cope, whose crimson magnificence, and embroidered folds, assimilated well, with the dignity of his character, and suited his rank and lofty bearing. However, on the present occasion, his accustomed carriage seemed to have vanished; his man-

ner, and aspect, exhibited a confusion, almost amounting to dismay. Chill beads of perspiration stood on his forehead; the unnatural wanness of his cheeks bewrayed the trembling of his heart. His lips were severed, and the deaf would have supposed, he was speaking, though he uttered not a word. His bloodshot eyes glimmered frightfully: his one hand busied itself, in an uncertain manner, in adjusting his scarlet hat, which was crushed by the compressure, and several of the long strings lay strewn about the carpet. His other hand, where the overfraught veins showed, like hard blue cords, through the transparent skin, that glowed, as liquid fire, had, in nervous irritation, unconsciously torn open the embroidered vestment beneath his ermine, and even the close shirt of haircloth, he wore next his skin, had been dragged aside, by his restless fingers, leaving his manly breast exposed to view.

Ferraro was astonished, beyond measure, that any causes, however powerful, could operate so strongly, on the nerves, and temperament of Martinuzzi, as to cause that air of discomposure. What he then beheld, presented altogether so very different an appearance, from the regent's usual aspect, that, by no stretch of the imagination, could he reconcile the contradiction. Could it be true, that one, whose tempered thoughts were reported to be serene and calm, as some inland lake, when not the smallest breath stirs its clear bosom, and whose feeling, Ferraro had always supposed, harmonized solely to "that peace of mind which passes all understanding,"—could a man, really thus tempered, let the intensity of his emotions convulse his frame, so fearfully, and his mere human passions boil over like the streams of Hecla?

Such an exhibition would seem alike incompatible with Martinuzzi's ordinary reserve, as a statesman, and a scholar,—with his dignified self-respect, as a prelate,—and his habitual, and chastened self-possession, as a Christian, and a man. Ferraro could hardly credit the information

of his own eyes, and as he glanced from the dignitary to the soldier, who so audaciously confronted him, he grew each moment, more and more, bewildered with astonishment, while Martinuzzi was so painfully absorbed by his inward, and indescribable emotions, as to be unconscious, for above a minute, of the intrusion of the secretary; but, on looking up, and perceiving who was present, with a strong mental exertion, like that of a man struggling for life, he suppressed the further exhibition of his feelings. As if in his own absolute despite, and in very defiance of his exhaustion, he almost instantly succeeded, in rallying his conflicting thoughts, and arose to receive Ferraro. His countenance meanwhile, although it still retained its native melancholy character, grew more composed, and became divested of that horrified expression, which Mark Antoine had remarked, on entering: "My friend," he said, addressing himself to his armed companion, "I will thank you to retire for awhile, into that inner room; when I shall be again at leisure, we will talk further." Close the door.—Even as he spoke, the other turned towards the opposite door, to which Martinuzzi motioned with his hand, and disappearing, left Ferraro alone, with the prelate.

As the door closed upon the subaltern, Martinuzzi advanced forward a few paces, to welcome his visitor, who threw himself on one knee before him. Grasping him firmly by the hand, as he assisted him to rise, the regent cried—"Welcome, worthy sir, I would not call this hand mine enemy, for the best jewel in king Ferdinand's crown. To you, and to your royal master, peace! What's to be done, before we part?"

"Your eminence will please to bear in mind," replied Ferraro, "that the words, I am necessitated to deliver, are those of my sovereign, although the voice is the voice of the humble individual before you."

"And welcome as before," returned Martinuzzi, with a

benign smile, which, however, the next moment darkened into sternness—"Neither Mark Antoine de Ferraro, nor the Emperor of Germany can, I am convinced, say, or demand aught unworthy of us." He paused, looking fixedly in the face of the envoy; "and for thyself," he proceeded, "the grandson of my ancient friend, Jerome Lascus, albeit thou knowest not how entirely, thou dost command my very heart, and wilt, doubtless, keep mine honour, bright and unsullied, as thine own must be." Martinuzzi ceased, as if waiting for a reply, and regarded Ferraro, with that look of mingled pride, and courtesy, which his noble features could so well express.

The secretary of Piadena, spoke not.

The preliminary address of the regent tended to confuse the young ambassador, and greatly increased his repugnance to the business in hand,—he could not prevail upon himself, at once to deliver the message of his king. It cut him to the soul to reflect, that the generous, and trusting courtesy of Martinuzzi, was about to receive so shameful a requital. He remained, therefore, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and the marks of no slight embarrassment were visible, on his countenance.

The urbanity of the regent would not let him appear to observe Ferraro's hesitation, and presently he again spoke: "By your leave, my dear sir, we'll hear your communication anon, and in the interim," he continued, advancing to the casement, which he threw open, "let us admit the gentle gladsome breeze partaker of our counsels." As Martinuzzi leant, for a moment, on the open window frame, his cheek paled, even to the hue of death. A sensation of debility seemed to overpower him; he pressed his hand upon his heart, from whose depths a sigh expired, so emphatic, as almost to amount to a groan.

"My lord, my dear lord, you're faint," exclaimed Ferraro.

The regent smiled languidly, whilst the previous wan-

ness of his cheek was succeeded, by that treacherous blood-flush, which was a faint reflex of those latent fires, which consumed him—

> ——————— " In his cheek
> And lips, a flush of gnawing fire did find,
> Their food and dwelling."*

It was, as if the quenchless soul fretted, at its mortal coil, blazing out only the more fiercely, for that state of debility, which was its aliment.

> " The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break."†

" Not so, Antoine; not so now," answered Martinuzzi, after a pause, " the calm autumnal air, doth bear a balm to my brow, harassed, and lacking the healing dews of slumber, and doth stir, and quicken the flagging spirit, which, in sooth, repose, this by-gone night, hath not renewed. I will recover instantly." He paused, and the expression of life shot again into his features, with the vividness of sunshine. " So, so, 'tis over now: and how is Austria?" he presently subjoined, in a freer tone, " in health? I hope,—I trust ——." There was something in the strong mental, and physical command over himself, that displayed itself, in the beaming visage, and attitude of Martinuzzi, at that moment, which Ferraro felt to be deeply impresive. Immediately he made answer.

" The archduke is well, would, I could report the same of your eminence! Pardon me, you are too lavish of your precious strength. Why suffer you the light of Hungary to dwindle thus? Your highness is to blame. Thou shouldst not task the nimble, and the silent hours of dark, and tire them with your service, but seek the gilded emptiness of the blessed sleep, or else devote the wanton time to festivals, and banquets, where the flushed throng weave the expressive *ugros*,‡ and the air resounds, with the varied music, elanced from warbling voices. Why not, my lord?"

* Shelley. † Adonais. ‡ The Hungarian dance.

"Ay, music, indeed!" repeated Martinuzzi, with a sigh; "yet, wherefore swell the song in vain? I have read, how, the bards of the olden age invested joy, with a superfluous harmony, and would accord no magic strain, to assuage the fierce pangs of dissolution, or the worse bitterness of undying grief."*

"Then, if not in such oblivious happiness," rejoined Ferraro; "why not a lingering on Lais' lap, abandon the rosy opportunity to deep delight?† 'Tis the sin of the world, or legends lie," and Ferraro smiled.

"Well, my dear sir," observed Martinuzzi, in a quiet tone, and with a grave and melancholy smile; "if I interpret your thought aright, I am more content to be thus weary, than to be so delighted. To graft virtue upon pleasure, Antoine, were to poison its excellence at the source."‡ Martinuzzi sighed, and was lost, for a moment, in painful abstraction; then, seeming to recollect himself, he took a single turn across the apartment,

* Στυγίους δὲ βροτῶν οὐδεις λύπας
εὕρετο μούση καὶ πολυχόρδους
ὠδαῖς παύειν ἐξ ᾧν, θάνατοι
δειναί τε τύχαι σφαλλουσι δόμους.—Eur. Med.
See also the context beginning at v. 193.

None swept the lyre, or golden lute applied,
To soothe misfortune, or to soften pride,
Or know the magic art, in "hollow cells,"
To touch the jealous soul, "black vengeance swells:"
None sent the murmuring shell's aërial tone,
Where "tyrannous hate" sits musing to betray,
To melt him even on his "hearted throne,"
While murder bares his hand, or meditates his prey.

The Greek tragedian to whom Martinuzzi alluded, never heard of the influence of the harp of David on the evil spirit of Saul, but one would have thought that his eminence might have.—On the other hand, see Proverbs, c. xxv. ver. 20.

† Ἐννύχιαν τέρψιν ἰαύειν ἐρώτων.—Ajax of Sophocles.

‡ Conjunctio autem cum honestate vel voluptatis, vel non dolendi, id ipsum honestum, quod amplecti vult, efficit turpe.—Cicero, De Fin. v. 8.

ere he added, with an air of dignity, as if with a view to change the topic: "But, in sooth, I think, you did not teach me how to serve you. Have you not some mission from your court, that I should hear? Proceed with it, gentle sir." The young secretary started, in his turn, and breathed hard for an instant; he gazed on the Gothic niche, that canopied the chair of state; he threw his glances upward, and downward, and around; his eye thrice wandered, from the fretted roof, to the ornamented footcloth; it at last alighted on Martinuzzi, and met his penetrating and inquiring look, and then Ferraro, summoning up all his presence of mind, thus, in an embarrassed voice, opened the subject of his communication.

"Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, King of Bohemia, of Hungary, of Halitz, and of Lodomeria ——." The cardinal broke in, with an air of surprise,

"Not of Hungary, Ferraro," he cried, in a deep and measured voice; "nor of Halitz, nor of Lodomeria."*

"Pardon me, good my lord," said the envoy; "sends greetings to George Martinuzzi, Lord Cardinal, Lord Archbishop of Strigonie, Lord Bishop of Waradin, and Lord Regent of the province of Transylvania; and, out of his great friendship and esteem, invests him with regal power and dignity in Transylvania, to hold the same as feudatory of the Austrian crown, for the term of his natural life, the right of inheritance to vest in the lord paramount, the Archduke Ferdinand, upon the demise of George Martinuzzi." The cardinal listened to the delivery of this extraordinary errand, without so much as moving a muscle of his face, or winking an eyelid; a

* The kings of Hungary bore the titles of King of Halitz, and King of Lodomeria, from the twelfth century. The other kingdoms annexed to the crown of Hungary at different times are Dalmatia, Croatia, Sclavonia, Rama, Servia, Cumania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Rascia. At the coronation of the kings of Hungary, twelve chiefs carried each a banner, representing the arms of these provinces.

slight cloud, indeed, passed over his marble brow, but when Ferraro had concluded, the evanescent hectic slowly vanished, and (like the faint hues of fading day, withdrawn from some miraculous chiselling of "the human face divine,"—perchance the choicest of beautiful things inanimate), showed his countenance more marble than before. Meanwhile, the clear visage of the youthful envoy, reciprocating the cardinal's transitory emotion, was suffused with the deepest crimson, and bent to the ground.

"Take back our answer to the Archduke Ferdinand," began the cardinal, with the most touching grace and dignity of manner, and in a tone of voice, which had to Ferraro's ears, he knew not what effect of awe, and majesty; "and give him to know from the Lord Regent of Hungary, that not for the imperial crown he aims at, or his brother's triple diadem, or the wealth of Montezume to boot, would George Martinuzzi ——"

What should have followed, was on the lip of the regent, when his speech was stopped short, by the projection of a human head, deeply shaded by the overhanging cowl, through the opening door. It was Father Dominick, who, for an instant, stood in the door-way, and then, with measured tread, walked up to the regent, and delivered a scroll of paper, into his hands. Whatever thoughts possessed his bosom, he stood by the side of Martinuzzi, motionless as a statue, with his head reposing on his chest, and his arms folded in deference.

Ferraro had only beheld the confessor, on one memorable occasion; but he knew, by the leaden crucifix at his girdle, that the figure could be no other, than that of Father Dominick, and a thrill of unpleasant surprise crept through his veins.

Martinuzzi ran his eye rapidly, yet with earnest attention, over the paper; his countenance lowered; he looked, for a while, fixedly on the monk. Presently, he seemed about to speak, but paused, and regarded

Ferraro, with a searching glance. Then, again, after being wrapped for several moments in deep reflections, he fell to a second perusal of the paper, and remained gazing thereon, without word or motion. At length, he turned to Father Dominick, who still retained the same fixed, and composed attitude, he had first assumed. "Pray you a word," he said, and, laying his hand on the sleeve of his mysterious confessor, Martinuzzi drew him deep into the apartment. The two spoke together, in inaudible whispers.

Ferraro watched, with wonder and curiosity, the change in the countenance of the regent, and the extraordinary conduct of the holy father. They continued to converse together, for several minutes, but at such a distance, as to place them out of earshot, and, although the young secretary caught a word, at intervals, from the lips of Martinuzzi, it was too unconnected and indefinite, to enable him to arrive at the nature of the conference. After a while, the speakers advanced forward, and Father Dominick was about to retire, when the deep tones of Martinuzzi's voice fell, full and distinct, upon Ferraro's ear. "Yes," he said, "the state shall still lie sheltered,* under the broad imperial tree I planted, and did nourish with the sweat of mine own forehead, although I may not hope to dream beneath its shadow. Thou knowest I have done this, and suffer it, solely for the well-being of,..my country."

There followed a pause, of one or two minutes, after Father Dominick had withdrawn, during which, Martinuzzi stood, with a hesitating, and perplexed air, as if endeavouring painfully, and with difficulty, to temper his rebellious will, and tutor his stubborn tongue, to a tone of thinking, and language more subdued than before, but also more accordant with his altered purpose. There-

* Sub umbra Scipionis civitatem latere.—Livy, xxxviii. 51.

fore, no indication of his secret feelings could be got at, while, in a severe, and deep-toned voice, the regent addressed the young envoy. "Mark Antoine Ferraro," he said, "since what time has your master held his imperial crown, in defiance of the international law of Germany, and of Europe? Since what time, I wish to learn, has he deemed, that strong power, like a penthouse, screens him from public opinion?" And Martinuzzi would have fixed his glance, on the countenance of Ferraro, but the secretary eluded the scrutiny, by bending his eyes to the ground.

Some pretence was muttered of the alliance of Ferdinand with Anne of Hungary, in 1515, and, likewise, of the engagement of King John, before his marriage,* that that kingdom should be restored to the race of Ladislaus, upon his death. Then Ferraro added, more boldly, though still in a faltering tone, "Would you deign to point out any act of the emperor, to which your inquiry were apposite, my answer might possibly be more to your highness's satisfaction."

"I allude, sir, to the formidable attitude, which the archduke has assumed, by riding these dominions with arrayed banner. I am here instructed, by my confessor, that the pennons of Austria now float on the walls of Alba Julia,† and, moreover, that the city of Coloswar is beleaguered, trenches already opened, and other works begun. What does this mean? The two kingdoms are at peace, — no war proclaimed; — is't not so? or have I all along misunderstood the Marquis of Piadena? Nay, we are, sure, at peace, else the embassy from the court of Vienna were not now in Hermanstadt. Ere now, I have been warned by certain of my court, but would not lend an ear to aught, so derogatory to the

* On this most intricate question, see Sambucus in appendice Bonfini, Ubi ex professo agit de concordia Ungarica.

† Alba Julia, twenty-five miles west of Hermanstadt.

honour of Ferdinand.* I own, I am at fault: can you help me? or —— prithee explain, my dear sir?"

"The Archduke of Austria was apprehensive," replied Ferraro, with no small confusion, "that the enemies of your eminence, those factious chiefs, whose licentious perfidy, and endless series of conspiracies have disgraced, for centuries, the registers of Hungary, who claim the right to choose the object, the measure, and the term of their allegiance, might, unless a sufficient force were in the field, to overawe their movements, make the occasion of the demission of the royal authority of her grace, an apology to perplex your council, and so plunge the province into confusion."

"Oh! I see — I have to thank the archduke, truly, for his consideration," replied Martinuzzi, with bitter sarcasm; "then it is for *our* humble service, — it is on *our* poor account, that the Austrian army now invests Coloswar, and bivouacs, on these cold nights, in the woods of Transylvania. Verily, we are highly obliged; but am I given to understand, that every attempt at insurrection, in right of the Queen of Hungary, is to be resisted, and possibly suppressed, by the arms of Ferdinand? — is THAT the reading?"

"The Archduke of Austria trusts that disaffection may not arrive at that height, which would require his interference," answered Ferraro.

"But if it turn out contrary to your royal master's expectations, it is, as I state?" persisted Martinuzzi.

"Even so," replied Ferraro.

"And, without any regard to the inclinations of the people, whosoever heads the army of our queen is to be deemed a rebel?" demanded the regent.

"In the instructions of my sovereign, I find no exception," said the ambassador.

* Fuerunt ex familiaribus qui admonerent, quibus ipse contra Caroli Quinti Imperatoribus, Ferdinandi et pontificis maximi diplomata ac promissa objiciebat.—*Forgach Comment.* p. 31.

"Ha! consider better — not ONE?" demanded Martinuzzi — "not the Lord Regent of Hungary?"

Ferraro bowed.

Martinuzzi saw his advantage, and at once took a higher tone of argument. "And does the Emperor of Germany flatter himself," he proceeded, with fervent voice, and an impassioned majesty, "that Europe will suffer this? My surprisal involves the immortal infamy of Ferdinand; — 'tis rank, 'tis foul, sir. The archduke in league, and no war proclaimed? It was not in the competency of a man of honour to apprehend the invasion of this territory, considering the amicable correspondence of the two courts. How far, however, the artifice and chicane of Austria will eventually advantage him, I need no sybil to inform me. The arguments, which your court now disdains, may be heard, ere this day twelvemonth, in the louder tone of the Ottoman cannon. Perchance, sir," he added, with tempered energy, whilst the brightest animation appeared in all his frame, and his eye sparkled, with the triumphant retribution, his soul anticipated,—"Perchance, the banners, that now wave defiance, from their ensign-staff, on the topmost towers of *Gyula-feir-var*,* may shake, in the stern blast, that lours in the east,—perchance, sir, the leaves of the old thorn, that fluctuate at their side, will outlive their grandeur, and, one of these days, whisper, in the whirlwind's ear, the tale of Austria's humiliation. We live in changeful times, Marc Antoine." Martinuzzi ceased; he seemed to hesitate, but shortly added: "After what you have declared of Ferdinand's determination, and remembering

* Alba Julia; the white city of Julia, called by the Germans, Veissenburg. Cette ville subsistoit avec splendeur du temps des Romains, sous le nom d'Apylum. M. de Sacy, tome 1. p. 408. It was rebuilt by Gyula, the Hungarian leader, after whom it takes its name, and not from Julia, the mother of Caracalla. The few, whom the question may interest, may consult Mem. de l'Ac. des Inscr. tom. xxviii. p. 451. Also, Append. ad Res Hung. in Scrip. Rer. Hung. p. 622.

the dishonourable advantage, he has obtained over us, we must needs bear with the overwhelming power, that cannot be resisted. Call some few days back, and well the emperor knoweth —" Again, Martinuzzi paused, compressed his lips forcibly together, as if to save his breath, to pronounce the final, and irreversible declaration. At last, " Tell the ambassador of Austria," he cried, and his voice slightly trembled, " that he may write to his sovereign, and say, that George Martinuzzi will condescend to accept the crown of Transylvania!"

Ferraro started. Although circumstances had, almost begun to persuade him, that such would be the issue of his conference, still, to hear the avowal of the regent's dishonour, from his own lips, visibly shocked the sensitive young gentleman.

Perhaps the whole wide world, of wretched casualties, presents no incidence more affecting, than, thus, being made an accomplice, so to speak, in the humiliation of an honoured friend. The more exalted our previous conceptions of his character, so much the more sensibly, do we feel the utter shock of his downfall and disgrace. It is painful to blush for one, whom, in our pure credulity, we had fondly gifted, with all the qualities, that dignify humanity. It is mortifying to behold our idol, disrobed of his imagined excellence, but it is doubly repellent and mortifying, if he, to whose superiority we had fondly clung, happen to stand before us, an eye witness of our shame, and sorrow, at his debasement. There is a magnetic sympathy, between ourselves and him. We avert our gaze, and would fain give the lie, to the expression of our countenance, but honest nature will, commonly, prevail, though the features be cased in the triple felt of hypocrisy.

" Scipio, my sable friend, by heavens! thou counselledst well," thought Ferraro to himself, in the hushed interval, which succeeded the last words of Martinuzzi. There was a dead silence between them, for a while,

elapsing in mutual, and conscious embarrassment. At length it was dispelled, by the young envoy, who, with frigid formality, observed;—

"I will lay before the Marquis of Piadena, those passages, which have just passed between us, touching your eminence's acceptance of King Ferdinand's proposals. How shall I state, your eminence purposes to dispose of—" here the tones of Ferraro's voice trembled, and almost failed him — "the Lady Czerina?" he added; and a thrill passed over him, as the title issued from his mouth, slowly and deliberately.

"Purposes to dispose of!" repeated Martinuzzi, and his eye lightened with indignation;—"to dispose of! I understand you not, sir. The personal effects, and allodial estates, of the house of Zapola, she may, surely, be permitted to retain?"

"Your pardon," said Ferraro, "I would ask, where it is intended, her grace take up her abode?"

"Would the Archduke of Austria object, that the capital of our dominions be graced, by the presence of the lady, you speak of, if we ourselves afford her our countenance and protection?" demanded Martinuzzi, in the tones of haughty irony.

"Perhaps it were dangerous," returned Ferraro; "her grace is deservedly popular, and——however I will submit your eminence's disposition, to the lord paramount, and ascertain his wishes."

Martinuzzi's eyes flashed indignant scorn, and he smiled disdainfully, as he observed; "Sir, I am poor dust, it seems, before the whirlwind of the absolute will of Ferdinand: well, so be it."

"And when," asked Ferraro, "shall I say, it will be the pleasure of your eminence to be crowned?" This inquiry was delivered, in a doubtful voice, the speaker not venturing, in mercy to the cardinal's feelings, to look him in the face, apprehensive of having his glance misinterpreted, and construed into an insult.

Martinuzzi was silent.

Ferraro again addressed him: "The crown of Hungary, men say, was wrought by angels, and is the gift of angels. The people, as your highness knows, are attached to visible symbols, that are of miraculous efficacy,* nor will they ever acknowledge you, as their lawful sovereign, unless they behold, upon your head, that diadem, which has been consecrated by ancient use, and rendered holy by its heavenly origin. When shall Transylvania rejoice, in your highness's coronation?"

"What time the last corps of the imperial guard, shall have recrossed the frontiers," replied the regent, with appalling sternness; "or else, when not one *living* Spaniard, or Austrian, which composes it, darkens my native land."

The revealings of Ferraro's soul shone out, as he raised his eyes from the floor, and gazed, with that inexpressible look, which Heaven had assigned him, upon the noble countenance of Martinuzzi; for his own feelings responded to his peremptory language, and again, he thought he recognised the inflexible spirit of the high-hearted statesman. He reflected, however, deeply, for a minute, ere he hazarded a reply.

"I cannot, without further instructions from the marquis, presume to dictate to your eminence, nor would I, willingly, stand committed, in this respect," said Ferraro. "I was prepared, I believed, for every contingency, but I find myself mistaken: your mounting the throne of Transylvania, did neither, I rather think, enter into the archduke's calculation, nor his ambassador's, nor," he paused, as if unwilling to wound the feelings of Martinuzzi, and yet irresistibly impelled to give vent

* "Les rois de Hongrie, qui en ont été solemnellement orné, ont le don de guérir non seulement les ecruelles, mais encore toute sorte de maladies venues de poison ou de la morsure d'une vipère ou de quelque autre animal venimeux en faisant sur la playe le signe de la croix." Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xvi.

to his sentiments, ere he added, almost with bitterness; "nor, could it, into that of Piadena's secretary."

No sooner had he uttered these words, than he repented his rashness, and his mind reproached him, for descending to insinuate a reproach. In this transition of sentiment, the blood rushed back from his cheeks, and he turned away his face; but he underwent no slight surprise, when Martinuzzi, almost instantly, retorted, with a peculiar inflection of tone, which seemed to contain the most cutting sarcasm:—

"I judged as much; but it was for your master to have computed chances and consequences, ere he committed his honour so inextricably."

There followed a momentary pause. "I suppose, you are aware, sir," rejoined the regent, in a voice, which subsided from its previous cool, sarcastic tone, into one of stern but passionless composure; "that, according to ancient custom, the states of Transylvania can only be convoked at Coloswar, which now is encompassed, on all sides, by the imperial troops. Sir, when your royal sender shall see cause to raise the siege of that city, our coronation will be open to us. When Transylvania is free, we will be crowned; meanwhile we rule, as heretofore — 'The crosier is an easy sceptre.'"*

The greater part of the remaining colloquy passed over, with manifest constraint on both sides, and, after a few more moments of desultory discourse, Ferraro was on the point of taking his departure, when Martinuzzi took him by the hand, and addressed him in a style, altogether different; "Marc Antoine," he said, in a tone, the courtesy of which might almost be deemed affectionate, "let there be no coldness between us—you have done your duty, as became you. Your character is not unknown to me, and it would gratify me, in a sense, which the customary forms of speech are feeble to ex-

* German proverb: "Man lebt gut unter dem krummstab."

press, to cultivate our further friendship;—will you, sometimes, barter with us a few brief syllables, which may embody thoughts, for the rumination of after years?—Come hither, often — the oftener the more welcome!—you consent. Accept my thanks; but you will not forget. There, farewell, and —." The regent paused, and then, dismissing the young secretary, subjoined, with considerable solemnity, "act an upright and a straightforward part, Marc Antoine, and you may find yourself, even beyond your hopes, successful, in what lies nearest your heart; go, now, and God bless you!" Martinuzzi waved his hand, and Ferraro withdrew, in pleased surprise, and respectful silence.

MANUSCRIPT XVII.

Ανηρ τα μεν εις τος ὑπηκους μετριο γεγονως, φοβερος δε τα ες τος πολεμιους.—PROCOPIUS.

FERRARO had scarcely issued from the citadel, when there sounded a loud voice along the vestibule, adjoining Martinuzzi's chamber. "What, ho! — who waits?" They were the words of the regent. Several knights and men-at-arms stepped forth. Martinuzzi approached one of these, and conferred with him apart, for above a minute. "Use all speed herein, Bathori," he concluded; "and if Abu Obeida be not at his own abode, track him, from street to street, from house to house, till you hunt him down, and then invite him hither;—you hear me?"

"I will, your eminence," replied Bathori.

"Right,—flag not now—spare not your breath now. I impose upon you this duty, because I know your zeal. Away! Do you, Nicholas Zrinii, hasten to the several barriers, and bring me intelligence, whether any person called Ragotzy, so the man's name was inscribed on his safe conduct, have passed lately. Can any here inform me, respecting a tall chevalier, at present on a visit to our most holy friend and confessor, Father Dominick?"

"May it please your eminence, I have noted such a person," answered one of the serjeants-at-arms.

"Have that man arrested in my name," said the re-

gent; "and some of you inquire of the gate-warden, if he have left the citadel since morn."

The attendant departed on his errand: — the door of the vestibule was ajar, and the officers, who were there on duty, could observe the regent, standing, in a musing attitude, in the midst of the council-chamber. Presently a person, plainly dressed, in the garb of a courier, hastily entered the vestibule; his heat and broken breathing, no less than his travel-soiled, and disordered vestments, seemed to announce that he had ridden hard, and had just alighted from a far journey. "Where is his eminence?" he hurriedly demanded of those about him. The retainers looked in the direction of the council-room, and the regent, having caught the inquiry, beckoned the courier to advance.

"Your tidings!" exclaimed Martinuzzi, with an almost breathless eagerness of tone, and manner.

"I have none whatsoever," answered the man.

The regent clasped his hands, and raised his eyes, overwhelmed, as it seemed, with disappointment. "You failed not to publish a description of Swartz's person to the authorities, at Buda?"

"I did so, my lord," replied the courier,—"and likewise at Presburg?"—"I obeyed the commands of your eminence in all respects," answered the man.

"You may go," said Martinuzzi. The courier was about to leave the chamber, when the regent again spoke,—"Another word." The man stopped short — "You entered the city by the road of St. Agatha? — was it not so?" The courier expressed his assent. "How goes the world, sir? — you traversed a distracted land," said Martinuzzi.

"Alas! my lord, all is terror and confusion,—the neighbouring plains are scoured by troops of horse — Coloswar is besieged."

"Did they suffer you to proceed on your route, through Alba Julia, unmolested?" interrogated the cardinal.

"I made a considerable detour, to avoid the risk of detention," was the reply.

"It was wisely thought of," observed the regent. "You did not happen to hear, how many may be on their way, or the number of those now encamped, before Coloswar?"

"I understood, at Presburg, the imperial force had been computed at forty thousand men; but, on the marches, the accounts vary considerably, some estimates hardly falling short of twice that amount."

There ensued another pause, when again the dignified examinator proceeded — "What army of reserve is there at Presburg, or absent in the neighbourhood on furlough?"

"None, that I heard of," was the reply.

Martinuzzi paced the small extent of the chamber, as if ruminating on the items of information, he had gathered. His eye kindled, for an instant, with a look of unusual fire, and there was an uncommon glow, in his kingly countenance. "Though," he murmured aloud,— "he dig like moles, Ferdinand may yet find his train of treachery undermined." Suddenly he halted. "Enough, my friend," he cried, and the courier took his departure.

"Now, you are well returned: what says the guard?" he demanded, turning to another officer, who, on the courier's dismissal, came forwards!

"Please your eminence," thus he made his report,— "the castle guard was only relieved half an hour gone by, since when no mailed chevalier has passed beyond the citadel."

"Tush!" ejaculated Martinuzzi; but the peevish monosyllable escaped him in so low a tone, as to be nearly inaudible. "Has not Bathori come back ere this?"

"I apprehend, not, your highness," answered the man-at-arms.

"The slug! — yet wherefore so?" he murmured to himself. "'Tis my own heart, the swiftness of whose

thought, so gallops and outstrips the tardy minutes,—but I can wait no longer. Bid the baron, when he returns, remain in the vestibule, till I have leisure to speak with him. Say I am particularly engaged the while;—none of you quit your posts, and—and —," the regent paused, "and, touching Abu Obeida," he presently resumed, "if he come in the meantime, you will usher him, into this apartment,—will you not?" As he spoke thus incoherently, his visage worked, while the tone of his voice, and his whole manner, underwent a marked, and extraordinary change; presently he turned aside his head, as if to hide the expression of indescribable horror, that overspread his countenance.

"Your highness!" exclaimed the man-at-arms.

Martinuzzi gazed on the speaker—it was a wild look, almost painful to encounter, as if, on the sudden, his very intellects tottered on their seat, and he was vainly labouring, to fix the wandering energies of his mind, on some point of immediate interest, which yet, for the instant, escaped his apprehension. "Oh, certainly, 'tis as I determine," said the regent, at length; combining so strange an obliquity of language, with that unwonted incoherence of manner, which we have described above: "Well, then, not here, not here,—do you understand? Good God!" and the voice of Martinuzzi heightened, and shook with emotion. "As you value your lives, not into this room yet," he continued, more collectedly; but, as if communing with himself, "Abu Obeida, should not be left in the vestibule — how then? Ha! that will be better—Hark ye, — demean yourselves to the Emir with deference, and let him be shown, into the blue chamber,—that of Father Dominick,—do ye understand?—until we require his presence."

"*Of Father Dominick*, your highness?" echoed several voices, in deep toned and horrified chorus.

"Let me hear no more of this; I am not apt for't, nor care to repeat my words," said the regent angrily. "Be

the watch doubled to-night. One of you, order out the city guard, before the citadel. See to it instantly."—"Ha!" he replied, in answer to one of his serjeants-at-arms—"Ha! by the western barrier, and so lately, say you? You are satisfied, the safe conduct was that of Ragotzy."

"That was the name, your highness," replied the man.

The regent motioned his hand to his forehead, with an impulse of vexation, but the action was hardly perceptible, and as transient as it was slight, "that to the mind 'twas but a doubt." "Hie thee now," he said, addressing the officer, who had last spoken; "to our well beloved commander, Valentinian, Count Turascus,—here are your credentials; tell him, that, for state reasons, which we hold back for his private ear, it is our wish, that every man in the Hungarian army be under arms, by midnight,—bid him, moreover, forthwith send a herald-at-arms, through Transylvania, holding aloft the bloody glaive, according to old usage.* Be this the war-cry to our absent Magnats—

* This custom, in common with many others of the feudal ages, was, at the period of our tale, in a state of decadency, and shortly after fell wholly into desuetude. It appears to have been first practised by the Huns, in the middle of the fourth century. Nic. Olahi Arch. Strig. Hung. Originally, such as did not attend at the spot, pointed out, by the bearer of the bloody sword, rendered themselves liable to a death of a peculiar and cruel description, but afterwards, this was remitted, and instead thereof, the culprit was condemned to a slavery, made hereditary in his family. Whence, says Bonfinius, the introduction into Hungary of feudal servitude; Hæc consuetudo multos Hunnorum perpetuum redigit in servitutem, Bonf. Dec. 1. l. 1.—see also, Tripart. Opus Decr. Constit. et Artic. Regum. incl. Reg. Hungariæ, à Steph. Werbeuzi, v. 1. part 3. Tit. 3., and the Decreta of St. Stephen, liv. 1. chap. 4.

The obligation of the freemen in the dark ages, to perform military service in defence of the community, resulted naturally from their having become landed proprietors, in the countries, which they or their ancestors had subdued, so that, they had at once, to guard against the hostility of the ancient inhabitants, and to take care, that in their turn, they were not dispossessed by fresh colonies of barbarians. The most rigorous penalty exacted of those, who disregarded this tacit compact, seems to have been that we have now under review. According to the milder law of the

My voice is the voice of God! Rendezvous at the abbey of Coloswar, to save the nation!"

The officer left the vestibule.

"And now, gentlemen," said Martinuzzi, turning to the rest, "be sure my orders be well looked to, and literally, as I have spoken—your heads shall answer." The men-at-arms, making a signal of obedience, fell back, and the regent, retiring within the precincts of his private apartment, closed the door after him.

He closed the door: he took several strides, across the room, and an extraordinary alteration was apparent in his mien, and conduct. His countenance underwent a frightful change,—he stood beside the oratory, for a passing instant, and then knelt down before the crucifix, and prayed aloud, in an exhausted and faint voice. "O clemens! O pie! vere passum immolatum in cruce, ostende mihi tuam misericordiam in hac horâ." He arose; large drops of perspiration bedewed his forehead; the light of command, and the light of genius had left his eyes,—all expression, save that of terror and disgust, had deserted his wan features; he stood a moment, with both hands clasped firmly, over his eyes; his gorgeous cope fell, unregarded, from his shoulder; his head stooped

Franks, the prædial bondman was entitled to his manumission on the payment of the Herebannum, *i. e.* a fine of sixty crowns, and in any case, the condition of servitude (made hereditary in Hungary,) was only to continue, until the labour of the culprit should amount to that value; Capit. Car. Magn. ap. Leg. Longob., v. 2. By the subsequent law of the Emperor Lothaire, his goods were forfeited, and he himself punished with banishment.—Murat. Script. Ital. vol. 1. On this head consult Montesquieu. Esprit des loix, lib. xxi. ch. xxvi.

The mention of the usage of the bloody glaive, which summoned the allodial proprietor to serve his country in the field, cannot fail to bring to the mind of every reader, the third canto of the "Lady of the Lake," where the gathering of the Highland clans, at the sight of the fiery cross, in aid of their feudal lord, is commemorated in seculâ seculorum.

Particulars of this custom will be found in Istuanfius and Bethlen. Istuanf. Hist. de Reb. Hung. lib. xii. p. 198. Volf.-Gang. Bethlen Hist. Transilv. liv. 11. p. 73.

down, and, we will not say, whether one single drop (unwonted relief), wrung, from the very depth of agony, might not have trickled between his long waxen fingers. The jesses of his heart, as if tugged at, by ten thousand unreclaimed falcons, seemed to rive his very frame asunder, and so he stood, gathering from the strange intensity of his emotions, a sort of inspiration. Presently, with wavering step he crossed the chamber,—he hesitated, and then laid his hand, upon the lock of the door, which opened into a sort of anti-room, whither the mailed soldier had withdrawn, on the entrance of Ferraro, as mentioned in the last chapter. Martinuzzi paused, for a few seconds, to nerve himself for the encounter; his face was of a marbly whiteness,—his eyes grew dim and dimmer, and as his hand removed its hold from the door, he slowly sunk down, on a seat beside him. Shortly, he again rose, pacing the apartment for above a minute, with a rapid step; he slackened it, and halted at the further door, which issued into the suite of rooms, appropriated to Father Dominick; thrice he turned the key, and having carefully shot the bolt, he closed around the velvet curtain, as if to afford an additional barrier. "Pereny would not," murmured Martinuzzi to himself; "but lest Abu Obeida, in his absence,—'twere better—." The regent broke off, and then passed leisurely to the door, which opened to the vestibule. Each footstep owned a feeling, and he glided stealthily, over the carpet, as if he feared to awaken the echoes, that lurked in the old wainscoting, or to attract the notice of the sombre portraits, whose ghastly eyes, in the deepening gloom, seemed to flare on him, with an unnatural, and portentous gleam. Having barricaded and secured this door, with similar vigilance and precaution, a second time he sought the entrance to the anti-room. Apparently, however, extracting a sort of courage, from his very dread, he opened the door, which creaked mournfully on its hinges, and passing forward, the lord regent of Hun-

gary enclosed himself, within the privacy of the inner apartment.

Meantime, the retainers, who waited without the door, made their several comments, on what was going forward. The perturbed and impatient manner of Martinuzzi, excited their astonishment,—the sudden calling out of the national troop, gave rise to innumerable speculations; but all minor circumstances were soon swallowed up, in the remembrance of the impossible orders, they had received,—to break in on the privacy of Father Dominick; on him, whom most of those present devoutly believed to be the incarnate enemy of man. To usher Abu Obeida, without previous word or notice, into his chamber,—possibly into his presence! was ever such temerity? All insisted on shifting the office, upon some of their fellow servitors, but each individual grew faint at the proposition. Whilst the matter was yet *sub litu*, the rushing of footsteps towards the vestibule, challenged attention, and the warder of the castle, with every symptom of dismay and horror, depicted on his countenance, burst amongst the already excited group, demanding to speak with the regent. He was apprised of Martinuzzi's commands, that he was not to be disturbed.

"Why, what's in the wind, now, man?" asked one of those present.

"Enough, in all conscience," replied the jailor.

"Tell us, then, have you seen a ghost?"

"Often; but what I have to acquaint his eminence with, is more astounding by half."

"Indeed!" said a man-at-arms, tipping the wink to his fellows; "come let us hear what has chanced?"

"I know no reason why you should not," returned the jailor; "hearken then. You remember, some years gone by, the noise, that was occasioned, by the mysterious disappearance of that poor sentinel,—who had been before wiled from his post, by the spectre of the preci-

pice, as he gave out, and whose carcase was afterwards discovered, beneath the southern rampart?"

"To be sure we do," exclaimed all in a breath, closing round the narrator.

"Well, I was not warder at the time; I was just a sort of helper, as one may say; but my predecessor, having his office taken from him, though it was no fault of his, you know;" and he turned an inquiring eye round the circle, as if to demand their accordance, in a proposition, which to him appeared so self-evident.

"None whatever," the most of them replied, being the required response to his eloquent appeal; "but go on."

"Well, as the saints ordained, I was promoted into the luckless fellow's shoes, being appointed head jailor; and such, as you all know, has been my honourable charge, down to the present hour, though that it will be so in the next, is more than I dare vouch for."

"How so? What have you been about?"

"You shall hear. In the first joy of my new appointment, I vowed a vow unto our Lady Mary. Now, can any of you give a guess, masters, what that vow was?"

"Why, to be pitiful to your charges, I should not wonder," observed one of the retainers.

"No, that was not it; I vowed to the blessed Mary, I would never, as long as I lived to be warden, lock up any prisoner in that cell, from which the devil, or his agent,"—and here the man cast a significant look at the door of Father Dominick's chamber—"conveyed away that sentry. Such, you must know, was the solemn vow I vowed, and, till the other day, I faithfully kept my pledge."

"And what the deuce made you break it at last?" demanded one of his listeners.

"Why the prison has been so crowded of late, that

every other solitary ward, but that identical chamber, became occupied; and not long ago, in the very middle of the night, ere I could provide for his accommodation, I was suddenly called upon, to take charge of a new man, just laid under arrest."

"Well, you did not confine him in the prohibited ward, I suppose?"

"Ay, but I did; the vow I vowed to the blessed Virgin, I forgot at a pinch, and a precious turn she has served me in consequence. In that diabolical dungeon, for several days and nights, I safely secured Hubert, of the night guard."

"Was it he?"

"Ay, did I not tell you so?"

"Not before; but I'll swear it was no other; there was always something mysterious, and reserved about that man. Has *he* too been conveyed away?"

"That's it, by the holy Mary! He is off."

"What! from that cell? I ever had my suspicions of him. Has he left no trace behind?"

"Not he, damn him! but he has left his bail; we have a substitute."

"A substitute! How? the devil?"

"No, not the Mano, exactly; though, mayhap, it 's much the same."

"Who then?"

"The Count Maximilian Pereny."

"The Graf Pereny!" repeated all around.

"Ay, as I despair to be forgiven, not a quarter of an hour since, when I passed into the ward in question, with provisions for my prisoner, in lieu of Hubert, whom I, as usual, expected to see, to my knock-down amazement, there sat his countship at his ease, in a corner of the dungeon."

"Why, how did he get in?" demanded his auditors, in a breath.

"On the horns of Beelzebub, I believe," responded the warder.

"And where is the Graf Pereny now?" asked some of the men-at-arms.

"Here, you rascals!" exclaimed a voice at an outer entrance of the lobby, and the important personage in question, swung the door, on its hinges.

MANUSCRIPT XVIII.

Hic situs est vates, quem divi Cæsaris ira
Augusti, patria cedere jussit humo.
Sæpe miser voluit patriis occumbere terris,
Sed frustra : hunc illa fata dedere locum.

" 'Tis good to be off wi' the old love
Before we are on wi' the new."—*Song.*

——— " I'd go out of myself,
Abjure all goodness, be at hate with prayer,
And study curses, imprecations,
So I might work revenge."

DECKER.

——— " 'Tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or—what is more difficult,
Getting rid of your prize again ; for there's
The rub—at least to mortals."

The Deformed Transformed.

THE evolution of our story lays us under the necessity of opening a new scene, and of introducing other actors, who, we hope, will " strut their hour upon the stage" to the reader's satisfaction. We must leave, therefore, the Graf Pereny, bullying, and ordering about him, in the ante-room of Martinuzzi, to usher the reader, at the same hour, within an elegant saloon, in the contiguous palace of Queen Isabella, where, indolently reclining upon an ottoman, he may observe Abu Obeida, who had lately arrived, in the capital of Transylvania, charged with a special mission, from the sultan.

The Moslem envoy was a tall, slender man, of pale complexion. The members of his face were minute, with the exception of his nose, which owned the true aquiline curve. His neck exceeded in length, and he might be apparently about sixty years of age; but time, though tasked to the uttermost, nor toil, his familiar, had tamed down the fiery lustre of the Ottoman's dark, wild eye, or chastened its bold, and haughty expression, or tempered the war-worn, and almost ferocious character of his general physiognomy. The amplitude of his attire was characteristic of his race. The long, loose pelisse of green cloth, with its free, graceful folds, and lining of costliest sable; the snowy trowsers, or *shaksheers*, hanging loose about the legs, like a sack; the vest, sewn on each side in regular rows, with large and valuable pearls; the Cashmerian shawl, in the form of a girdle, through which projected the hilt and pummel of a hangier, or dagger, mounted with precious stones; the slippers, of yellow morocco leather; but, more particularly, the *recherche*, turban, whose green colour was an infallible token of the true blood of the wearer, and "whose restless front," surmounted by a flowing plume, bore a ruby of inestimable price,..all indicated the *classic* costume of the East.

From these minutiæ, it was easy to infer, that the personage in question could be no other, than one of the grand pachas of the Ottoman court; but, ere the eyes of the reader can be supposed to have acquainted him with the fact, his attention must be called off to a different, if not to a more fascinating personage, for a near footstep is heard,—the arras gently undulates,—it is drawn aside, and Queen Isabella, magnificently arrayed, according to her rank, sweeps into the apartment. Then Abu Obeida arose, and made his obeisance, with more than oriental obsequiousness, bending his eyes upon the ground, and holding his right hand motionless on his heart.*

* The customary mode of Eastern salutation, according to Sandys.

"We perceive, by the missives, you bear from the heroic sultan," began the lady, "that he considers you, sir, completely embued with a sense of his interests and wishes, in regard to the important, and interesting negotiation, to which those missives relate."

"Your grace will pardon the boast," answered Abu Obeida, "but, the humblest of his slaves, even I myself, am, in this respect,—the mental shadow, the lock and key, of the inmost soul of him, who is lord and arbiter of all, that the sun irradiates and vivifies; by whom I am commissioned, ere I ventured on the interesting subject we are presently to consider, to entreat your grace's acceptance of a most ancient relic of one Roman, whose works, he is given to understand, most learned Franks hold in high odour." And, with these words, the emir handed to the queen a plain silver pen, on which these characters were inscribed — *Ovidii Nasonis Calamus.* *

"Ha!" returned Isabella, with an air of interest, as, after due acknowledgments, she gracefully accepted the simple token, "a memorial of Ovid! — doubtless, with this little instrument, were bodied forth those exquisite strains from Medea to Jason,† which, with no ineloquent or feeble scholarship, I have heard a valued friend, some time translate, for my delight, into harmonious numbers. I am myself no linguist, but I have been taught to love Ovid." Isabella sighed, and, as she sighed, she turned her head away, and a tear fell on the pen. Almost instantly recovering herself, she subjoined, in her usual

* The above is, according to Ciofanius, who says, "Isabella Pannoniæ Regina circiter annum MDL. Ovidii calamum ex argento Tauruni quæ est urbs inferioris Pannoniæ, ostendit Petro Angelio Bargaeo, qui hoc ipsum mihi narravit, cum hæc inscriptione: *Ovidii Nasonis Calamus*, qui non multo ante id tempus, sub quibusdam antiquis ruinis fuerat repertus. Eum regina ipsa plurimi faciebat et velut rem sacrum curem habebat."

† It was on the banks of the Danube, among the barbarous Sauromatæ, that Ovid wrote his Epistles.

soft voice, " I knew the poet had been an exile in our land, and, if I recollect rightly, his place of sepulture was discovered, not very long ago, at Stein-am-Anger, the ancient Sabaria, in Lower Hungary ; and yet so long," she added, with a smile, " that I must have been an infant at the time : but tell me, how came this precious relic, in the possession of your honoured master ?"

" It was found, a few years since, under some ruins in the neighbourhood of Belgrade,* and brought to Solyman," replied Abu Obeida.

" I will not easily part with it," said Isabella, pressing the pen to her lip. " You smile, gracious sir, but, though Heaven acknowledges but one religion, earth owns many superstitions, the truest of which is, that of poetry, and it claims to have its proper saints and relics. I fear we may not long keep company, but, believe me, while I have life, I will wear, next my heart, this bit of silver, as I would a charm. Alexander, we are told, appropriated the perfumed casket of Darius to the reception of the Iliad ; but there can be but one meet reliquary for the pen of Ovid," and Isabella put it in her bosom. There was a momentary silence. " We find," presently resumed the lady, having recovered her composure, " that you are instructed and empowered to act in the sultan's name, throughout our negotiation, with the like decision and unerring faith, as if thou thyself wert he, with whom the engagements are entered into."

" Your tablets will inform you," replied the Turk, " that, whatsoever terms I subscribe, the invincible king of kings has sworn, in the holy name of Alla, to ratify."

* Belgrade.—Ciofanius says, sub Tauruno, (see previous note). Belgrade, for a long time, was supposed to be the ancient Taurunum ; but this opinion seems to have been satisfactorily disproved by M. Danville. See Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscrip. et Belles Lettr. tom. xxviii. Belgrade was built on the ruins of Sigidunum.

" Enough," said the queen ; " the word of Solyman, issues from his lips, as free from aught, that would breathe a shadow on its brightness, as that blade of Damascus, he knows so well to wield, springs from its jewelled sheath. As to your imperial master, then, I address myself."

Abu Obeida bowed low..

Isabella hesitated for an instant. Then, abruptly stepping close to where Abu Obeida stood, again spoke, in that low, deep tone of voice, indicative of a fiery nature, reined in by powerful motives of self control, and with an air and gesture strikingly significant, she said, " Before we discuss the interesting topic, which we propose in our present commune, I would inquire, whether this be your only business in Hermanstadt. Have you no private intelligence with HIM ? — hey, sir ?"

" With whom mean you, lady ?" asked Abu Obeida.

" Thou art very wily, or very dull, man," returned Isabella ; " why, with that priest, that traitor, that ——, sure you understand me now !"

" Not I, your highness," replied the Mussulman.

" By the bones of my buried ancestry !" exclaimed the queen, with some heat, " thou frett'st me." She paused a moment, in deep agitation, and then added, in an ebullition of bitter feeling, which only long-stifled hatred, breaking forth into expression, could exhibit — " Martinuzzi, sir, — (why do you torture me ?), — the Lord Regent of Hungary and Transylvania, .. *the king !* since you will have his titles in full. — Pah ! pah ! my lips are blistered ! — Oh ! you apprehend me now ?" and a bitter smile betrayed the acuteness of her emotion. " The infamy steams in the general breath, and every child in Hermanstadt can tell you who is *Kiral, tekintetes Kiral !** Have you, I demand, any private communication with that — how weak are words to speak him to

* Gracious king.

the height! — that boil of state? Answer me, as thou wert Solyman, who stood there; ha!"

Abu Obeida instantly replied, "None private, your highness. I am, indeed, commissioned by despatches, received within the last hour, to protest against the Transylvanian fortresses falling into the hands of King Ferdinand, but such is public matter, and has no connection with the pending negotiation, betwixt yourself and the sultan."

"'Tis well, sir; and that man is still ignorant of my present determination, (certain stipulations being conceded,) to bestow the Queen of Hungary on Solyman?"

"His highness, I should imagine, can have no suspicion of your purpose," returned Abu Obeida.

"Oh! you know him not!" exclaimed Isabella, "nor guess, how subtler than the fox his nature is; only God, sir, knows what mines he has shaped in the bowels of the earth; but, with this train, I trust to blow into the air the fabric of his ambition. Yet tell me, I have always understood, that, for the last two centuries, since what time the Tartars outraged your sultana,..the wife of — Ilderim, was he not called? — you know whom I mean,— him surnamed of the Lightning?"

"Bajazet, your grace," said Abu Obeida.

"Ay, surely, Bajazet," rejoined Isabella. "Has it not been subsequently the invariable rule of the Sublime Porte, to admit none but slaves to the sultan's bed? — How may this difficulty of the Ottoman pride, or policy, be evaded?"

"My sovereign master," said the envoy; "will disregard that maxim, and espouse your daughter, as his sole and lawful *Kadeun*, partly in consideration of the honour of the alliance, but chiefly out of his regard for the lady, and admiration of her charms."

"Nay, no laboured hyperboles, sir," said Isabella; "we Franks have little taste for oriental flowers. The child is well enough, but she is merely a child, and were it

not to rescue her, from the insidious policy of that man, and for other reasons, which are private to me, it were as well, that she had more experience, ere she undertook the duties and responsibilities of a wife. Some three summers hence, with all the soul of her ancestors strong within her, she would seem a meeter spouse for the mighty Solyman. But, alas! in that space of time, what might not sceptered tyranny, and withering selfishness practise upon her? Me, sir, the relict of King John, of him, who first raised that godless man into a world's wonder; me, the ingrate has despoiled of state and power, and left a cypher, in the dominions of my husband. He is the coffin of my greatness; and will he spare the daughter, think you, after treading down the mother's honours, as they were writ in sand, and scattering the dust before the whirlwind of his tyranny? No, sir, the queen of Hungary's health, her freedom, her very life, may be compromised, if, ere it be too late, she do not secure the protection of some potent ally, and I know none so powerful, as Solyman. These, and other reasons, have induced me to wave all minor objections, and to embrace the proposal of your sultan."

"Whatever the cause, the result will constitute his happiness," observed Abu Obeida, breaking in as soon as Isabella paused; "*mashallah!* praise be to God! But will you be pleased to recapitulate those preliminary articles of our agreement, which, if I understand aright, it is indispensable, at the hands of Solyman, should be conceded."

"The grand point, sir," said Isabella, "is, of course, that my daughter enjoy the free exercise of her own religion; next, that the eldest child be educated in its mother's faith, and acknowledged the heir of Hungary, in bar of the claim of Ferdinand, the *souzerainte* of the sultan himself, or the preposterous usurpation of Martinuzzi."

"These are hard and dangerous stipulations," replied Abu Obeida; "but to what would not Solyman accede, if

thereby he might make the divine Czerina, the partner of his throne. But may I remind your grace, there was one condition, more peculiarly relating to your highness, which I should hope will not be insisted upon."

"The queen of Hungary's advantage herein, is what certainly lies deepest at our heart," replied Isabella, gravely; "yet, even so, I can imagine nothing, better calculated to secure her interests, and those of her posterity, than the article you refer to. No, sir, be it understood, not one jot can we abate of our demands, consistently with our duty. The sultan must engage to make us the sole Waivode of Erdély for life, and to obtain, by persuasion or force, the deposition of that man, or no daughter of Hungary shall, with our consent, ascend the throne of Turkey." Abu Obeida paused, and hesitated for a short space, ere he made answer.

"That particular may scarce consist with the honour of Solyman: setting aside political considerations, his highness stands pledged to Martinuzzi, both as ally and friend. May I entreat your grace to wave so unreasonable a proposition?"

"It is impossible, sir," rejoined Isabella; "the cardinal's fall has been my favourite object for the last twelve months. You know not that man, nor can conceive, what I have been made to suffer, at his hands. (High Heaven! the thought of it racks me)! The claims to majesty, my husband left me, he has trodden; like a name in sand, to nothing. But I am resolved on retribution; for retribution have I schemed, watched, and prayed this many a day; and now, that your master's policy might minister to my revenge, think you, I will forego it! No, by the Lord above, will I not! Either the hydra crest of Martinuzzi quails its glory, or 'tis no treaty." Isabella ceased, and paced the chamber, for a minute, with hasty and troubled tread. Then, suddenly stopping near, where the moslem envoy stood, silent, and with his dark eyes fixed on the floor, the queen added; "We have

possessed you with our secret hopes; only be wise, only bring this matter to bear, and tax our bounty as you will, you cannot over-rate the gratitude of a royal queen, or estimate too highly, an injured woman's vengeance." Abu Obeida bowed. "These provinces, sir," presently resumed Isabella; "have forfeited estates in store, and their soil, remember is golden.* The havings of royalty, though drained, are far from exhausted; thou canst not devise a gift, but I will, ——" she paused, looked earnestly in the countenance of the envoy, but presently subjoined, in the softest tone imaginable, "My good friend, perhaps, will name his terms?" Abu Obeida again bowed, and in a few words, delivered modestly, but firmly, declined, with such thanks as courtesy dictated, the proffered liberality; assuring Isabella, that his sincere desire to carry forward the treaty to a successful issue, could not be increased by any contingent advantage, which might thereby accrue to himself.

"Disinterested man!" exclaimed Isabella, and her eyes beamed triple sunshine, as she spoke; "how I envy Solyman the possession of such a subject,—of such a friend! be it, as your incorruptible nature wills. At least, however," she added, "oblige me so far, as to accept this token of an unhappy lady, who is, I would say, who was, the queen of Hungary." Saying these words, Isabella produced a golden cup, inlaid with diamonds, the lid of which was surmounted by a clock, that indicated, not only the time of day, but also the

* The gold of Transylvania was celebrated of old: see Strabo, lib. xiii. circa medium ;—and St. Bernard calls Dacia, Terra Auri, lib. iv. De Considerat. ad Eugen. Pap. In proof of how the province abounded in milk and honey, to say nothing of Abrugbanya, Zalathna, and Keresbanya (Montes Auri et Argenti ditissimi) we extract the following from the Chorographia Transylvaniæ, *written in the very year of our story*. It is inserted, vol. 1. p. 797. Hist. Rer. Hung. Neque suspicitur quispiam in tota Europa huic provinciæ Transylvaniæ opulentia esse parem, aut usu fructu præstantiorem.

march sublime of the celestial bodies.* With a warm smile, she delivered the same to the Turk, who received it, with great demonstrations of thankfulness, and after gazing on it for an instant, with much appearance of amazement, and kissing it, Abu Obeida answered,

"This will serve to remind me, noble lady, (bending reverently to the queen), of thy gracious condescension to one, who (under reservation of his allegiance to his lord and master), is the humblest and most devoted of thy grace's servants."

To this courteous declaration, Isabella was on the point of making a suitable reply, when quick steps, and the war of jarring voices, in the ante-chamber, interrupted their conversation. The altercation, which we mention, had been, for some time, conducted in a lower key, but now first became audible.

"I tell you I must have entrance!" exclaimed one of the interlocutors, in a raised and peremptory tone, "so stay me at your peril."

"Ha! who are you, say must, in this habitation?—Back with you, unmannered lord!"

"Nay, then, slave, my sword *must* do my message," hotly returned the first speaker.

"How! wouldst draw, i' the queen's palace?"

"Ay, stand back, knave, for, wer't in a church, I must obey orders, persisted the other." There followed a brief scuffle; one of the twain was heard to fall heavily to the earth, and almost instantly, the arras was flung aside, and the Baron Bathori, who, in his ireful mood, had borne down the opposition of the seneschal, burst into the presence of the queen dowager, and the Turkish envoy. On perceiving whither his precipitance had hurried him, the intruder drew back. He might have a

* This same machine made part of the imperial inheritance of the grandfather of Charles the Fifth. The circumstance of its having been fabricated at so early an era, would seem to deserve mention in a history of the arts.

foretaste, identical in kind, though limited in degree, of the bitterness attendant on that revulsion of feeling, which, probably, overwhelms the soul of the suicide, on finding himself thrust, instantaneously, by his own act, on a scene of splendour, too dazzling to be contemplated.

At a short distance from the door, stood the stately Mussulman, having one foot rather advanced, whilst his long neck, thrown back, looked like the polished shaft to the capital it upheld. His dark eyes flashed on the noble that indignation, and surprise, which he did not suffer his voice to prolate. Nearer still, Isabella, drawing her person up to its full height, whilst her ample crimson robe seemed, as it were, to spread out, in yet prouder folds, as her bosom swelled beneath, with alternate scorn and anger, planted herself, as if to barricade the privacy of her chamber, from unhallowed intrusion. She also fixed her eyes, with a keen and stern regard, upon Bathori, who, cap in hand, remained near the door, apparently deprived, in his bewilderment of surprise, of all power of utterance. The pellucid brow of Isabella gave tokens of gathering passion; her eyes struck fire, as, in a voice, which trembled with that agitation, which she yet felt, it would derogate from her dignity to manifest, she said — "How's this, unscrupulous knave? — knows't thou in whose house thou now art — in whose presence thou stand'st, that thou comest upon us thus unceremoniously?"

To this inquiry, Isabella received, at first, no intelligible reply; for Bathori's confusion was so great, that words came not at his will, and it required an effort of self-command, merely to falter out, "The regent's orders, gracious madam!"

"His orders, indeed! — unmannered varlet! What leave hath he, or any subject, to order you, sir, to press on our retirement? But, by the soul of my husband! —

this shall be answered.—What, ho! within there!" and thus speaking, Isabella hurriedly, but with stately step, passed from the room through one adjoining it; when, instantly, her voice was heard, still louder and sterner than before: "Who waits, I say? — close all the doors: foul mischief has here been done!" Immediately, many retainers hurried into the apartment. "Apprehend that person," said Isabella, with a dark and angry frown, pointing to Bathori; "he has slain to death, I fear, my favourite usher, who would have kept him from us. See, and some of ye disarm the traitor."

The senseless body was forthwith carried off, and, for long, baffled every effort to recover him, so effectually had the blow, which laid him prostrate, done its office. Whether from apprehension of the consequences of his heat and rashness, or else owing to the reaction of his audacity, in having, unwittingly, forced himself upon the retirement of the queen, or more probably from a mixed feeling of consternation, at his double danger, the faculties of the baron were so wrought upon, that it was only, as he was being taken away in custody, that he recovered from his bewilderment.

"I have, at least, a duty to execute in respect to your excellence," he said, addressing Abu Obeida; "the regent would speak with you, without delay, touching affairs of state. I was bidden to urge your instant attention. And now," he proceeded, turning to Isabella, whose eye already kindled into impatience, "may I ask, madam, whither I am to be conducted?"

"To prison, sir," said Isabella, haughtily.

"Upon what pretence, your highness?" demanded the baron.

"Wouldst parley with us?—why, for riot in the royal palace, and your attempt on the life of our servitor," replied Isabella, with warmth.

"In respect to the former accusation," returned Bathori, "I had the express commands of his eminence,

to spare no pains, in getting speech of the Turkish minister, and your highness's usher would have thrown obstacles in the way of my duty. As to the latter charge, I can truly say ——— "

A rich rush of blood flooded the countenance of Isabella. "You hear," she exclaimed, breaking in upon his explanations, and her luscious lip curled with excess of scorn and bitterness: "You hear,..as I thought, the cardinal, as usual, is at the bottom of these insults."

"Your grace," said Bathori, "puts a hasty construction on my words,—I never meant to intimate that."

"We will have no talk bandied with us, sirrah," said Isabella, again interrupting him. "Remove your prisoner, and see he be forthcoming, at lawful demand. We would willingly try the strength and integrity of the palace-confines. Those of the castle are in bad repute; but if any caitiff escape *our* ward, the jailor had best look to his own:" and, in obedience to these orders, the baron was withdrawn from the chamber.

Nothing further, that deserves mention, occurred in the course of that interview, between Isabella and the Turkish envoy. Neither seemed willing to readvert to the delicate matter of their interrupted colloquy, and, shortly afterwards, Abu Obeida, having consigned the gift of the queen to the care of an attendant, with a profound obeisance, took his leave.

As we have already, in a previous chapter, expatiated rather at large, on the character and fortunes of Isabella, we need not here do our readers the unkindness to recapitulate. We believe, we partly explained the anomalous rank she held, and the constrained position, in the state, which she occupied, owing to the arbitrary proceedings of Martinuzzi. He not only prostrated his Titan foe to the lowest depth, but chained her there, like another Typhœus, by the superincumbent weight of his dominion. Besides that the pecu-

liarly haughty temperament of Isabella, writhed beneath those causes of irritation, there concurred certain circumstances, about this period, to exasperate her already inflamed, and corrosive bitterness, into a transport of mind, bordering upon madness.

The warm, and perfectly unselfish feeling of maternity, so universally builds itself a nest, in the breast of woman, that it is commonly deemed an innate property of her being. Nevertheless, some rare examples, which blacken the pages of biography, would seem to contravene this notion. Instances are on record, of mothers holding in detestation their own offspring. We would not, however, insinuate that Isabella was ever exactly, a monster of this description. "She did not," to borrow a turn of thought and expression, so peculiar, that its author cannot be mistaken, "refuse to become the mother of"* our heroine; but, during her early years, she scarcely ventured, even to her own thoughts, to analyze, and confess, that feeling of aversion, which lay at their core. It was towards the opening of our tale, that her sentiments assumed a more active, and distinctive character,—the tender instincts of a mother, withered beneath the upas of revenge, which a singular concurrence of circumstances engendered, in the rank soil of her heart. Under the bitter alchemy of a single prepossession, Isabella's whole nature became transmuted, till that antipathy, which had long brooded, or lain torpid, at the bottom of her soul, effervesced, and overflowed, in a strong tide of intolerable abhorrence.

Alas, for woman! who can love but once,—whose heart, sense, soul, become concentrated upon a single object, and who, when all she thinks, hopes, braves, curdles into despair, will yet doat on, in very madness of abandonment. Alas, for woman! whose susceptibility is her curse,—whose angelic nature becomes her re-

* Gibbon.

proach,— whose constancy makes her ruin; her best trust is chance, and her only hope is apathy. If she come to yield but one jot, to the infantile, but omnipotent divinity, let her tremble! For her, there is thereafter, no retreat,— her heart-sigh is an earthquake, for evermore, and, thenceforth, she dwells on a volcano. Alas, for woman!— and unto man, eternal shame! who can cast the livery of his heart, with as much facility,— ay, and in as brief an interval,—as the viper his slough; and, imbibing a new passion, as he'd don a new suit, will disregard his love of yesterday, as he might a garment overworn. And who, I ask, when the sweetness of her nature is turned to gall, and those soft emotions, which assimilated her unto angels, are devoted to libertinage, or whipped into the bitter wrath of jealousy, and the insanity of revenge,—who shall presume to arraign woman of the consequences? Not man,—cruel, heartless, hypocritical, exacting man!—whose self-centred and ingrossing passions, are their origin and first cause:—not man, who lies, and fawns, and wriggles himself into woman's affections, and whose love, whether it prove true or false, is almost equally her bane. Oh! let her, when she yield to the tempter, make up her mind, for tyranny or desertion:—

> "Oh for that warning voice, which he who saw
> The Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven aloud!" *

Maidens! who, yet zoned in purity and peace, walk the green sod of earth, with clear spirit, and elastic step, start back, when your bosoms heave their first sigh, in token of reciprocating passion!— fly, I tell ye, fly, as the startled African, on his arid shore, darts off, on hearing the summons of his hunter. The musket-shot, and the bosom-throb, are alike granted, as the warning of the coming evil,..both are meant for an omen, and a death peal: fly ye, like him, from *slavery!*

Oh, thou dædal world! which aboundest in strange

* Milton.

contrasts, and heart-sickening contradictions, what is there in thy dark ordering, ("thy *nomostheios*") to make the vicinity of woman's first love, and early death, so desirable? Speak, or that tyrant talisman may yet be found, which, in olden time, conjured up eternity, like a familiar spirit, and from his void and fathomless abysm, constrained an answer. It is our ignorance that makes us mortal!—Where must we look for knowledge? Speak! Bid the sphered skies be transparent if, "dim in the intense inane," * one might read their spell. Or, doth the order of all circumstance lie in the deeps, which will roll away in the latter days, and disgorge their tremendous secret? "The depth saith it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not with me." † Yet some spot there is, in this universal frame, replete with oracles, such as, in the gentle and deep recesses of woman's indignant heart, perchance, might find "an understanding;" but, alas, "a voice is wanting — the deep truth is imageless." ‡

Can it be about that weird basement, where, according to the old religion, the tripod of Pythian Phœbus was reported to heave over the innermost abysses of the globe? § No;

> "Apollo, from his shrine,
> Can no more divine," ‖

nor, "the mind pierce the impervious future." ¶

Then does the oracle of the dead, near the river Acheron, ** continue to respond, in the accents of the un-

* Shelley. † Job. ‡ Shelley.

§ Τρίπος πύθεου Φοιβοι
ἀνά τὸ δάπεδον
ἵνα μεσόμφαλοι λέγονται μυχοί—Euripides.

‖ Milton. "Delphis oracula cessant." Juv. S. vi. v. 544. See also Lucan. Phar. l. v. v. 3. See also Porphyry, apud Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. v. cap. 1, page 179.

¶ Πων δε μελλοντων τετυφλωνται φράδαι.
Pindar, 12*th Olympic ode.*

** The river Acheron. The flaming gulph of Tartarus, is not here meant, but the stream flowing in Thesprotia, near Aornus, where, accord-

charnelled, and unclasp, with inorganic whisper, the instant mystery of human life? No—even the pious materialist of Gargettum* held the art of divination, "as a mere chimera;" and what if he then erred? 'tis certain that, that voice, that erst shaped out veracious auguries hath since been stricken mute—

> "No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
> Inspires the pale-eyed priest, from the prophetic cell."†

I raise my thought to a truer Deity. Oh! rend in twain, unknown Omniscience!‡ the inmost veil of this phantasmal scene, that we may learn by what prescription, for a long succession of ages, woman has been made the victim of a system, which hath, for her—

> "Spoilt the sweet taste of the Nepenthe, love."§

"The curse has been on her from the sacrifice of the daughter of Zephtha, the Gileadite, down to that of the sister of Wesley, the methodist."¶ When, oh! when will the day of her deliverance come? and she be exempt from that evil taint, that bandaged state of slavery, at

ing to Pausanias, was situated the oracle of the dead. Cicero, however, (Tusc. 1. 16.) places this oracle, or one similar, at the lake Avernus. The reader will recollect a very comical anecdote respecting the oracle of Thesprotia, told in the 5th book of Herodotus. It is more than ordinarily bizarre, even for that most incontinent (save Gibbon,) of historians.

* The pious materialist; Epicurus.—For his personal piety see an unwilling witness, Seneca, De Beneficiis, lib. iv. chap. 19. According to Diogenes Laertius, he rejected, in his grand epitome, the art of divination. His notion of pleasure consisted in the enjoyment of a perfect tranquillity of mind and an indolence as to the body;—*μετε αλγειν κατα σομα, μετε ταραττεδα κατα φυχην.*

† Milton.

‡ Unknown Omniscience, *i. e.* Jehovah,—the Adonai,—the Lord of the Jews,—the *αυτογενεθλον ανακτα*, mentioned by Porphyry in his Philosophy of Oracles: to whose incommunicable name there was an altar inscribed at Athens, from beholding which, St. Paul took occasion to plead that he did not propose the worship of any new God. Acts of the Apostles, chap. 17.

§ Shelley.

¶ The Rev. W. J. Fox.

which, her pure spirit hath long instinctively revolted, and in the enactment of which, she had no vote?

> "Thou hast a voice: exert it, to repeal
> Large codes of fraud and woe, not understood
> By all, but which the wise and great and good
> Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel."*

Ah! wherefore,—wherefore, doth my pen here linger, and why doth my heart misgive me, that I seek to cheat myself with words? Why do I totter on the extreme verge of the dark stream, and dally thus with the deep moral of the tale, I have to tell, instead of plunging at once, into its mysterious current? Reader, hast thou never felt faint reminiscences, like dim oracles of a remote existence, partaken years, centuries, ages since,..embriotic stirrings and intimations in the brain of some foregone variety of being,..hast thou—

> "When long sepulchred images are about,
> Like echoes of what have been to be again,"†

ever questioned thine inward soul at fervent noon-day, or in the hush and silence of the night? Surely, this has evened before? Certes, I have encountered such a form, or I have heard that voice, or methinks I have witnessed these things ere now, in the world, that spreads beyond us,—in the life, which precedes mortality? The author of these evanescent pages has met with those, whose memory is subject to such shadowy parallelisms, which, like intuitive inspiration of the past, or "echoes of an antenatal dream,"‡ will darken across the mirror of the mind, and he is himself one of such. If the reader hath ever experienced those

> "Blank misgivings of a creature,
> Moving about in worlds not realised,"§

he will understand, and believe the writer, when he dares own, that now, shut up at midnight in his study, penning

* Shelley. † Montezuma. ‡ Shelley. § Wordsworth.

this idle tale, with an "ample bowl" of unmixed gunpowder, (inspiring that not unpleasing, yet, melancholy mood, which is most proper to him,) half emptied on a side table; he can recall to mind, some long while since,.. he cannot say how long—in some different planet probably,..though he dreams not where, having been circumstanced precisely as at present, "surrounded with the wisdom, the poetry, the romance of past ages,"* and in the same relative situation were his desk, lamp, and other appurtenances of the table and room,—but more particularly, he recollects, loitering over, and musing at this period of his lucubrations,—and he shudders at the retrospect, from having then paused, with the like shrinking reluctance, that overcomes him at this instant,—BECAUSE HE TREMBLED TO GO ON,—but the writer will no longer play the child or the coward, and start at charms and presentiments, with which his own fancies, like eclipses, darken the painted air—

> "Hence, horrible shadow!
> Unreal mockery, hence!"

that with sane mind and steady hand, "I may see and tell," the fatal tragedy of Isabella's passion,—of Isabella's jealousy.

We observed, in an earlier chapter, that the queen mother, though possessed of all the capacity of loving, did not, during her maidenhood, nor indeed for several years, subsequent to the death of John of Zapola, happen to fall in with an individual, whom she deemed worthy to occupy "that craving void left aching at the breast." At length, on a fatal day for himself, and the happiness of others, ("accursed, and in a cursed hour,"†) the youthful secretary of the Marquis of Piadena, arrived in Hermanstadt, and presenting himself and his credentials at the palace, cast the lot of the future life of Isabella.

We are ourselves no great believers in that electric,

* Bulwer. † Milton.

and nearly miraculous sympathy between the sexes, which, in common parlance, is styled "love at first sight." That such things have been, we will not take upon us to deny; they ought, however, we rather think, to be deemed exceptions to the ordinary regulations of Cytherea in this regard; and, for our own part, if ever we are to be subjected to the inevitable shafts of her golden bow,* whether in the active or passive voice, we hope ("for certain unknown reasons") to be classed under the general rule. However this may turn out, we are bound to tell this present story as we find it; and we read, that Isabella had no sooner beheld Ferraro, than the golden light she long had watched for, dawned upon her soul, and all the mysterious properties of her nature, which had lain in aimless abeyance, during the advent of so many prevailing summers, shone revealed at once, and proclaimed, through every fibre of her frame, "Thou art the man"—"*de te effata divinata sunt!*" The fire of love, like inspiration, came down direct from heaven, to consecrate the still sanctuary of her heart, and there, like the lamp of Vesta, to burn inextinguishable for ever.

We desire, for obvious reasons, to despatch this part of our relation, in as few words as possible; indeed, were it otherwise, there was something of indecorous hurry and mystery, in the commencement, and progress of this ill-fated *liason*, which, with all our endeavours, we have never been able to elucidate. This hath arisen, no doubt, from the scrupulous privacy which was found indispensable, in carrying on such an intrigue. Let it suffice, that, however it came to pass, one little month had not elapsed, from the time of Ferraro's arrival in the city, ere, mutually betraying and betrayed, the haughty and susceptible Isabella, not only gifted the too amiable secretary with

* Μήποτ ὦ δέσποῖν ἐπ' ἐμοὶ
Χρυσέων τόξων ἐφείης
Ἰμέρα χρισας ἄφυκτου οἰστόν.—Eur. Med.

her heart, but that heart audibly confessed her partiality. "She owned the soft impeachment," and—why should we particularize?—

> "Need we intrude on hallow'd ground,
> And draw the curtains clos'd around?" *

It was subsequent to the plenary dishonour, which the consistency of our narrative, and the full development of events have obliged us to glance at, that Antoine Ferraro set eyes on the beautiful heroine of our tale. The introduction was attended with circumstances, from which after-occurrences drew an omen, and which seem to demand a greater latitude of retrospect, than were correct or fitting, in the depicture of those other "love passages," to which we have just barely alluded. There was a grand gala, given by Cardinal Martinuzzi, in commemoration of the natal day of the Queen of Hungary, when the attendance of all the high and noble in Hermanstadt, followed of course. The regal splendour and festivity displayed on this occasion do not fall, within the scope of our plan to enlarge upon; if the fair reader will please to call to mind the gorgeous minutiæ of the last rout, she graced with her presence, she will save us the necessity of a lengthened description. *Mutato nomine*, it may be made to answer the purpose. We merely advert to this entertainment, which, indeed, occurred before the legitimate opening of our story, in order to snatch from oblivion certain startling circumstances, which solemnised the first meeting of Czerina and Ferraro. The festal scene was laid in the Gothic hall of the citadel; flambeaux of perfumed wax, effusing a subtle and potent odour, were upheld by the long row of liveried pages, stationed at close intervals amid the pillars, which supported the groined and lofty roof, and the voluptuous flame flowed and ebbed, in concert with the graceful and expressive undulation of the Hungarian dance, or *ugros*. *Here* pant-

* Goldsmith.

ed beauty, whose small feet ceased to flit in the demi-mazy round,* crimsoning, and half breathless, with the delicious animation of the national *galoppe*, whilst on her ear, the prevailing sigh, perchance frighted with languid passion, broke, to be treasured in her memory for ever. *There* stood apart the statesman, or the warrior, gazing on the assembly, according to the character of the man, with interest, indifference, or contempt; whilst, in the midst of yon group, on a somewhat elevated dais-platform, at the upper end of the hall, sat Martinuzzi, circled by the wise and the aspiring, himself most wise of all, and, as some misdoubted, the most aspiring. And now the guests had nearly all arrived, when suddenly there arose a general call to the attendants, to relumine their lights. A pallid sulphureous hue had diffused itself around, and many a ruddy cheek, all at once, grew colourless. The glow of manhood, and the flushed features of panting loveliness, alike dimmed and waxed pale, in that blue and vaporous atmosphere, the flambeaux were relumed, but the pestilent gloom deepened. At that moment, a tall, mysterious figure, having its cowl so far drawn upon its head, as to conceal the features, suddenly entered, and slowly glided up the entire length of the hall. The effect was electrical; it was not mirth, merely, but life, which seemed suspended; tongues, that wagged the instant before, broke off in the midst; eyes, that ever previously sparkled, now dimmed; the sweeping robes of the ladies ceased to rustle, the clank of the knight's gilded spur, without which accompaniment, according to the opinion, and proverbial expression of the Hungarian lassie, a

* Une espéce de gavotte, ou l'on tourne plusieurs fois pendant que les autres observent exactement la figure du demi circle, ... les dames ainsi entremelées avec les hommes, et menées en dansant autour, font mieux voir leur charmes et leur attraits à toute une nombreuse assemblée.—Description of Hungarian Dance, in Mem. du Comte Betlem Nicklas.

The Heyducks were wont to practise the old Pyrrhical saltation, or warlike way of dancing.—See Brown's Travels in Dacia, &c. 1688.

dancer might be likened to "a kiss without a beard," no longer beat time to his agile tread; even the very harmony, the musicians had just shot through the entranced air, soon lost its spell and its enticement, and insensibly died away into tremulous silence; no sound was audible, save the quick, short respiration of the guests; and the death-like pallor, which usurped the natural hue of their complexion, proved that the spirit of awe, and superstition had sunk into their hearts. Several of the pages, and badged servitors hastily fled the scene of ghastly excitement, bearing away with them the waxen torches. The remaining lights, though not extinguished, seemed partially eclipsed, by some potent interposition; and as the monk, like a spirit, passed through the recoiling assembly, an unnatural chillness crept on the misty air. Shortly, this horror-compelling being attained the chair of state, where sat the lord regent, who, with displeased mien, and eyes, apparently fixed on his movements, awaited his confessor's coming. He reached the spot, when, just as he was in the act of muttering some close whisper in Martinuzzi's ear, two side, and opposite doors of the apartment simultaneously threw open their folding leaves, and through the one, a splendid vision, like the breaking east, burst on the sight and soul, in the form of our youthful heroine, by whose lithe, and ethereal shape, and springy footfall, the very Hebe had been rivalled. Hers was, indeed, a figure, worthy to be seized by the sculptor, if he had wished a study for

> "An angel, newly drest,
> Save wings, for heaven." *

Czerina was companioned by a bevy of fair damsels, who followed in her train, and who, though some of the comeliest daughters of the land, were conspicuously thrown into shade, by the surpassing charms of their royal mistress. At the same instant, through the opposite

* Keats.

door, entered Ferraro, and, as the two thus fronted one another, those near might have caught the grand secret of natural sculpture, alike from the square formation of the forehead, ample elevated chest, and sinewy characteristics of the young secretary, and from the swimming voluptuous contour of the sylph-like queen. Like the Medicean Venus, to whom alone she might compare; her stature was slightly below the medium height of womanhood, but the development of her shape was perfect, and every limb was rounded to the last inimitable touch of nature. In truth, time, the sorcerer, had not been idle with that Peri shape, since we remember our heroine, in her girlhood, her ears imperforate,—not yet pierced by the sharp trephine,....that symbolical initiatory, that "little go," (to apply a college phrase,) so typical of the future; whereby we infer, that a tender damsel will, one day, achieve her "diploma of hearts," * and inherit "the blushing honours" of her destination ——since we remember her,

"Youth's damask glow just dawning on her cheek."

acting her mysterious dream or night-mare in the vaults of Hermanstadt. The few years which had intervened, had wrought their wonted magical touches, upon the light symmetry of her figure,—still, for *her*, childhood itself, seemed to linger, as if loath to resign her dove-like attributes, even at that interesting period of life, when adolescence is languidly departing, like the crimped and mossy cone, which, in the early courtings of the spring, expands its virgin petala to view, and the mind is left uncertain, whether, indeed, the incipient and half-blown floweret can be said to be developed into a rose, or yet locks her beauties in a bud. But the sense, the soul, of the female, is ever ripe and precocious, compared with her more visible and material loveliness; and, beyond a doubt, had Czerina shot up a true woman,

* Moore.

in her graceful pride, and shrinking vestal purity, in the nubile consciousness, and thrilling feminacies of her nature,—

> " ———Tenerum jam pronuba flamma pudorem
> Solicitat: mixtaque tremit formidine votum." *

She was splendidly arrayed for the occasion. Her dress was a low tunic and skirt of satin, of a hue, only less dazzling and pure, than the transparent beauties, it encircled, and contributed to veil. A cincture, studded with pearls, as white as truth, defined her minute, and ariel-like waist, "sized to Love's wish,"† and braced up, (how needlessly!) an alabaster world, which might excel, in certain essentials, the bust of the Venus de Canova. Over all, hung a long simar, of Florence satin, whose gorgeous embroidery swept the ground. Her profuse, and resplendent hair, braided in a chaplet of milk-white pearls, and gracefully arranged, loosened, here and there, its amber torrent, which, in the form of luxuriant ringlets, might be seen floating over her snowy neck and shoulders; and (so low as the envious robe permitted), upon the swell of her more brilliant bosom, whose light and undulating motion, would daff the wanton intruders aside, as the small, slowly-lifted billows of Pactolus, their golden sand. Splendid pendants clung to her ears, and a precious reliquary, bedded in gems as rare, and steeped in *rosenöhl*,‡ hung from her slenderly-rounded throat, by a thin carcanet of gold. From her head, even to her feet, a deep and silvery veil, fringed with gold, loosely flung its transparent folds, which, from their subtle texture and material, might have been mistaken for floating gossamer. The wide falling sleeve, open from above the elbow, disclosed her tapering and graceful arms; a plain bracelet of gold spanned her slender

* Rapt. Proserp. Claudian.

† Fletcher.

‡ Atar-gul, or attar of roses.

and infantile wrist. These points of costume presented a combination of simple elegance, which suited well with the first freshness of her youth, and the dream-like character of her beauty.

At the first glance he caught of the young queen, Ferraro started back involuntarily, and then fixed his unconscious, yet scorching gaze upon a countenance, replete with such assemblage of matchless fascinations, as beauty is a word too weak for. One glance of her full sapphiric and brilliant orbs,—that, freighted with the very soul of sensibility, and glowing in the vapoury shadow of silken lashes, looked out from under brows, distinctly pencilled, and arched in the true lineaments of grace; drank the very essence of his manhood, for all to come of life. Her cherry lips, dewy, and curling up, with an indefinable, but luscious expression, if they betokened a little passion, or rather self-will, were indicative also of a deal of sensibility. Her cheek, without being so full, as not to harmonize with the delicate moulding of her other features, was exquisitely rounded. Her nose was elegantly cast, the nostril having somewhat of a slight Grecian curve. Her chin was accurately convex, and its single voluptuous dimple, cupid's arsenal.

Before Ferraro's dizzy eyes all things swam, as Czerina, with elastic gait, advanced up the apartment. The illusive and artificial lights,..the shining draperies,..the distant fretted roof,..the long perspective of marble pillars, with their gilt embossments, their flowery carvings, and gay festooned capitals,..the garlands,..the sweep of the splendid hangings,..the gorgeous decorations,..the atmosphere, suffocating as that, coffined up in charnel vaults,..the glimmering torches meteoric gleam, like those melancholy fires, which dimly flicker up the shadowy courts of that colossal skeleton, whose name is Death,..the still existences,—looking like inanimate or monumental forms, putting on life itself, along with life's mocking ornaments,..the stricken and appalled

expression of the human features, reflected, as it were, through a vaporous medium of sulphur-blue,..all that conspired to make a scene, which might aptly represent the jubilee of the dead,..each of these particulars, and all of them, harmonized together, blended, and given back in the gaudy beams of continuous *tükörömmels*, or lofty mirrors,—were utterly disregarded in the one, deep, absorbing impression, which our heroine had made on the heart of hearts of Ferraro. He reeled after, rather than followed, her fairy footsteps, unconscious of all else in the world, and hardly less rapt than the Danish prince, when he tracks the shade of his sire.

Czerina, meanwhile, wonderingly, made her way towards the upper end of the apartment, and her guardian rose, so as to receive her, near the foot of his throne. In the usual course of things, it must have excited the marvel of some of those present, that their native sovereign, was thus let measure the entire length of that hall, unaided, and without a shadow of ceremony, whilst Martinuzzi, apparently lost in solemn musing, hardly proffered more welcome to the queen of Hungary, than he might have deigned to exhibit, on such a festival, to the humblest hand-maid of her court; but whatever indignation, the regent's discourteous behaviour had otherwise operated, was quickly stifled, in the universal, and appalling impression, that he, the *Mano*, the evil spirit of the land, now incarnate beneath the sacerdotal vestments of Father Dominick, stalked unannounced amongst them. That he, who had hitherto restricted his beat to the chambers of the dead, or the vaults of sorcery, now, for some fatal cause, obtruded himself in moments of festivity, and despite even the comforting reality of the blaze of lights, the pressure and the voices,—that the unholy being dared present himself, in the very hold and circle, at the very celebration, as it were, of human life. Martinuzzi exchanged greetings, with the Lady Czerina, and offered his gratulations, on the joyous occasion, with

infinitely more appearance of cordiality, than, on her first entrance, his abstraction of manner promised. Yet the more accurate observer might, perhaps, have detected, in the patronizing tones of his voice, in the quiet, and condescending smile of the blue eye, as it ran over every line of loveliness, and, so to speak, in the encouraging mode of his address, rather the superior, though kind bearing of the guardian and tutor, to his pupil, than the beseeming and defined deference of a subject, to his queen. The compliments of Martinuzzi were closed, with a deep sigh; for an instant, he again seemed lost in profound and painful musing: then, abruptly snatching the hand of Czerina, he prepared to conduct her to the chair of state, covered with cloth of gold, which, surmounted by the same silken canopy, had been prepared, near to his own. Just at that moment, Father Dominick stood beside the regent, and his shadow rose gigantic, against the wall. "Your highness," he said, in that congealing hollow tone of voice, peculiar to him, but still so accurately pitched, as only to reach the ears of Martinuzzi; "your highness, he is come, present him."

"Not yet,—not on the present occasion," answered the cardinal, unconsciously loud.

"Yes, now," rejoined the monk; "I am wanted elsewhere, and 'twill relieve the pale company to have me hence; only let me first witness the seal to our long-pending treaty. He is nigh."

"I see him not," returned Martinuzzi.

Father Dominick moved aside, and, by his change of position, exposed to the sight of the regent, the figure of the Austrian secretary.

Ferraro had followed the steps of Czerina through the apartments, with straining eye and agitated gesture, whilst, on the dim arena of his inmost heart, there struggled emotions, such as transported Romeo, when, in the person of the fair Capulet, he recognised the

embodied creation of his first phantasma of female excellence; the realization of that ideal form of beauty, which gilded his earliest dream of passion. Ferraro was stationed, at a short distance, from the unconscious object of his instinctive adoration.

"*Here!*" exclaimed a voice, whose most emphatic and distinct intonation, issuing from an uncertain direction, thrilled through the very hearts of all who heard it.

"*Here!* let the children's troth now be plighted, and the compact of their sires, this way, find fulfilment."

With a piercing cry, Czerina started some paces from the spot; her throat strained, and her bosom, whiter than the whitest Parian marble, rose and fell, as if with some strong internal emotion; her cheek lost its vermeil *teint*—her whole frame shuddered, from limb to limb.

"*Here!*" reiterated the same hollow voice.

"Merciful God! how can it be?" shrieked Czerina, her eye glancing, from the confessor to the lord regent, as if struck by some idea, which troubled her senses. Martinuzzi took an involuntary step forward, but, at that moment, the pale maiden sunk, in a species of syncope, into the extended arms of Ferraro. The scene of terror and tumult, which ensued, on that startled company's recovering from their first amazement, the reader may more readily imagine, than we depict. There arose a hubbub of voices through the room, "Seize him! traitor!" rang confusedly on all sides. Some one or two, bolder than the majority, disposed to put the universal feeling into action, rushed forwards. "Which?"—"Where is he?"

"At your elbow," burst at once from several tongues.

"How?—fled?—yes, no—stop him——VANISHED!"

It was under the mysterious circumstance, which we have commemorated, that the love of Ferraro took its commencement. His best affections were properly forestalled by another object, and that inauspicious mad-

ness of an unguarded hour, colored the pilgrimage of long years, and, like the star of his fate, crossed the orbit of his life's young hopes, to pervade, with its fatal astrology, the remainder of his wayfaring!—Oh! there is a poetical justice shown at times, in the awarding, even of this world's punishment, which does the stern heart of man good to dwell upon. It is on such occasions, we recognise the descent of a mightier and a meet *Avator*. It is then, that we raise our eyes to the Omniscient Ruler, and feel, that there is a knowledge, greater than that of man,—a power to strike, surpassing human strength. It is then we commune, with our still bosoms, and acknowledge that One liveth, who is privy to "our ingoings and our outcomings;" and it is in those moments, we are made to comprehend, that, what, to the external judgment of our fellow mortals, may appear to be an infliction, or even a retribution, for delinquency, done in the light of day, is, in earnest, the visitation of Heaven, on the embryo weakness, the vanity, the anticipatory inclinations, not yet degenerated into action, pent in the abyss of our hearts, deeper than ever plummet sounded, and which only the ever-present eternity of God's sight * might apprehend. "Often when the soul sins," says a profoundly eloquent writer, "her loftiest feelings are punished by her lowest." † The guilt is scourged by means of the folly, for, like the warmth and light of Heaven's luminary, guilt and folly are so intimately blended, as to be inextricably ONE.

> "The Heavens are just, and of our pleasant vices,
> Make whips to scourge us."

Thus argued Ferraro, as he revolved over, in the sanctuary of thought, the many obstacles to his ever attaining the consummation of his wishes, and felt (with that loathing of himself, which will sometimes steal across

* Visionesque ejus præsens semper eternitas.—BOETHIUS.

† Eugene Aram.

the sinner, on finding the fruition of sin to be its rightful heritage, and that the proper punishment of our evil desires, is incident to their possession) that, however wretched his destiny, it was not the hand of fate, but of his own irregular appetites, had woven the dark thread, which ran through the web of futurity, to mesh him in its toils. What one of the ancients has very elegantly said of malice, may be predicated of other vices, — they drink one-half of their own poison ;* but true love, like lightning, overleaps all constraint, all fence, riding upon a thought.

Ferraro followed up his first introduction. He met our heroine in secret, and the natural sympathy of two young, and beautiful, and (as respected the lady at least) pure beings, begun in instinct, matured rapidly into esteem, and was shortly ratified by judgment. Well wert thou compared, oh Love ! in the Song of Solomon,† to Death. Truly, thou art as sad a leveller, and hast, though in a different way, his chiefest attributes,—pulling down the mighty, and setting up the humble. Thou canst burst thy coil, and, with thy eternal wings, make free the heart in agony, the soul in dust and chaos. How strong art thou, iñ thy very waywardness ! how deceitful, in thy purity and faith ! how conscious, even in thy blindness ! God of this false world ! that couchest in the dimples of youthful beauty, and, in the consecrated round of maidens' bosoms, hast raised a tabernacle to thy worship, why dost thou invariably resort to the meanness of finesse, and prompt to all the paltrynesses of subterfuge and double dealing ? And wherefore, as in the mystery of thy last sacrifice, so also in that of thine initiatory rites, dost thou dissemble with truth, and throw a veil over the workings of nature, to

* Quemadmodum Attalus, noster dicere solebat, malitia ipsa maximam partem veneni sui bibit.—Seneca, Ep. 82.

† Chap. viii. ver. 6.

thy glory? Why doth the incense of thine idolatry darken the labyrinth, which surrounds thine altars? and, out of the millions of sinuous paths, that lead thereunto, why hast thou not cut one, direct, and smooth, and free from sorrow, and deceit, which *is* sorrow?

In the more retired and private grounds, attached to the gardens of the palace, (which were all included within the precincts of the city fortifications), Ferraro was used, during the brief and feverish hey-day of his intrigue with Isabella, to compass frequent interviews, with that unhappy lady. To this end, in the dawn of her fatal prepossession, she had presented him with a key, which unlocked a small postern, built in the hollow of the wall, opening nigh a pavilion, formed by the protecting foliage of several giant beech trees. Here, softest twilight floated, and the hugh magnitude and strict embrace of interlacing boughs, made a cool umbrage of noon-day, and of sun-set, dunnest night. Beneath this umbrageous arch, whose dense summit shut him out from the eyes of heaven, were his earliest orisons offered up to the idol, who had won his transient and corporeal regard; and the same temple would witness his guilty vigils. But, from the epoch, that a purer and deeper inclination rose upon his heart, the light, and sensual character of his love for Isabella, flitted from his soul, like a blind mist, that is touched and dissipated, by the holy and searching rays of the morning sun. Never again did he hold his illicit rendezvous, in that fatal pavilion. He avoided it as sedulously as Eneas might have done the cavern, whither the fury of his fate had first driven him, and he carefully shunned all further communication, with his royal paramour, as the Phrygian Blifil (without having been governed by so honourable a motive,) fled the presence of the enamoured Dido. By means of the key, which, in her delirious abandonment to bliss, Isabella had originally given him, Ferraro gained access, at all hours, to the palace gardens, and met at

first, by singular and recurring accidents, and afterwards by habitual appointment, (implied, if not expressed,) the beautiful heroine of our history.

The mysterious process in the heart of Czerina, which brought about this indulgence, it were hardly fair, though not difficult, to analyze. The fine, intermediate gradations, which connect the incipient liking, with the final stage of woman's first love, are usually imperceptible, and too evanescent for her own consciousness. Czerina was innocent, and innocence is apt to be inconsiderate; she was young, and youth, we know, is without distrust. From the haughty indifference, and cool sarcasm of her mother, from the stern and strict lectures of her guardian, from the solitude of her chamber, or the irksomeness of court formalities, it was ecstacy to steal to Ferraro, and, with new and entranced emotion, to listen to the outbreakings of his honeyed breath, and mark his words, as they took the form of eloquence, or thrill (without knowing why) beneath the still more dangerous oratory of his glances.

"Teneris heu lubrica moribus ætas!"*

Oh! it was sweet thraldom for both, .. it was like recurring to that first freshness of feeling, which built the paradise of Eden, to have their young hearts thus enchained, at many fleeting opportunities, all in solitude and in seclusion. Whenever Czerina could make her escape, she would saunter, with Ferraro, amid the copses and glades, close at hand, or along the sequestered, and indirect paths of the royal inclosure, both unconscious of any thing, but the pleasure of each other's conversation. But she would invariably turn from the more frequented avenues, so as not to render herself obnoxious to observation; yet this procedure ever took place, on her part, with so little participation of consciousness, that

* Claudian.

really we can scarcely allow it to have been an act of volition. Her feminine rectitude, and maidenly purity, are not to be questioned; but, ah! at her age, though the heart be incapable of guile, it is peculiarly susceptible, and, in its deep recesses, what dim and undefined sensations lie couched, almost inactive, and only fated to burst forth into existence, after the pressure of one Promethean spring. Still, she somehow or other suspected, she was not acting quite in accordance, with the forms of maidenhood, in permitting Ferraro and herself these furtive, and delicious hours of intercourse, though a deeper philosophy — the subtle instinct of nature — corrected this vague, but painful sense of impropriety, and persuaded her, there could be no danger or indiscretion in her secret assignations, panoplied, as she knew she was, with her own dove-like modesty and conscious innocence, as in mail of proof. "To the pure all things are pure," so, in her secret soul, she made a sort of compromise with her principles, (if, indeed, her indistinct glimmerings of what was requisite, can properly be so styled,) and, deeming, the decorum of her sex and station prescribed a needless sacrifice to punctilio, she inly resolved to elude having that sacrifice enforced, by keeping the harsh world in the dark, as to her proceedings.

Oh! there is no subtler casuist, than the internal predilection of our own hearts! or surely, Czerina might have reflected, that the concealment constituted the error, —that, however indiscreet to carry on the intimacy, in the face of day, it could hardly, in that case, be deemed criminal, but that an intercourse, such as hers, with Ferraro, prosecuted in secrecy, assumed a deeper, and a more delicate character, and rendered her liable to imputations, which she would have shrunk into the earth, to suppose her conduct authorized. One thing, however, should be noted,—no warm breathing of positive affection had ever hitherto escaped the lips of Ferraro—he understood better what he was about,—he rightly apprehended,

that, with so primitively innocent a being, it were impolitic to give point to the mysteries of the heart, by venturing a specific declaration. Even his short experience had taught him, he was only likely to retard and confound the incipient development of young love, in an extremely pure and guileless bosom, by agitating the question of its existence, before the tender plant had attained its, otherwise, inevitable growth. There is ever, besides, a natural diffidence, incident to genuine affection, which will cause Passion to hide his arrows, and his torch, for fear of giving offence, and which, is calculated to restrain within bounds the transports, even of the boldest lover. This sentiment, without other concurrent inducements, might have long withheld Ferraro, from rashly explaining to their amiable object, the state of his affections. However it came about, Czerina, for a considerable time, held unrestrained and delighted intercommunication with the Austrian envoy, without a suspicion shadowing her guileless bosom in respect to his object, or any inadvertence, on his part, gifting with a premature character of activity, the inclination of her sliding heart. There is no saying, how much longer such " pure ignorance" might have lasted, had it not been partially enlightened by one marked event, occurring about this period, that helped to give a precise determination to her previous vague reveries, and dreams. The incident we allude to, as it affords a glimpse, into the character of our heroine, we shall proceed forthwith to lay before the reader.

It was one evening, after having prolonged her customary ramble, beyond the usual hour, that she found, on her return to the palace, the lord regent waiting for her in an ante-room of her apartment; and, since what occurred, on that occasion, will tend to explain the condition of her heart, and must illustrate, in some sort, the anomalous and uncommon relations, subsisting betwixt Martinuzzi and his royal ward, we shall take the privilege of our craft, to detail, with less regard to brevity than is our wont, the particulars of their colloquy.

Martinuzzi sat absorbed, at a short distance from the door, having the palm of his one hand clasped against his forehead, when Czerina, with noiseless step, and heightened pulse, entered the room. It was a sort of saloon of moderate dimensions, most choice and delicate in its decorations, and commanding, from its single window, a prospect of the plaisance and its embowered terraces. Not until after several moments had gone by, did the regent condescend to notice the presence of his ward: at length he slowly raised his eyes. The intellectual hue of his face seemed worn into perfect paleness, and there was a severe and thoughtful meaning, lightly chiselled into hieroglyphics, on the expanse of his lordly brow, and also traced, even more legibly, throughout the expressive repose of his other features, a meaning, which Czerina caught in a single glance, and which, however used to his peculiar manner, and inured (if the reader will let the expression pass) to his *pathetic sternness*, she instinctively trembled, in the present instance, to interpret.

"Hither lady," said Martinuzzi, rising, and Czerina, with feverish perturbation, crossed the room, to the place, where the lofty, and erect form of her guardian stood out, in bold and distinct relief, against the casement. Calm, still, with his eyes fixed steadfastly on her lovely countenance, mutable and transparent as those skies, which lit it up with something of their own rich hue, Martinuzzi contemplated the youthful queen, for a while, in silent and earnest thoughtfulness. When he spoke, Czerina fancied, she recognised an impressive solemnity, in the tones of his voice, whose authoritative cadence, qualified by melancholy tenderness, had at all times a strange power over her. She could not be sure of aught unusual; but the thrilling chillness, with which the bare imagination had stricken her heart, for a moment, froze her life-blood, at its source.

The state of her feelings towards Martinuzzi, had long been a problem to Czerina, — mixed and indefin-

able, they were such, as not all our other annals of this world's metaphysics might parallel. Haughty from her birth, her pride, nourished by the consciousness of her endowments, mental and bodily, and by the anticipation of that universal homage, they were calculated to inspire, was, as it were, confirmed and justified, by the emblazoned scroll of her royal ancestry. She felt indignant, at the cardinal's usurpation of her mother's co-ordinate jurisdiction, during her own minority;—that mother, by persevering in her animosity against Martinuzzi, inspired into her daughter the same prejudices, by which, she herself had long been actuated. Daily grew Czerina more jealous of her guardian's ultimate purpose, and more alive to the thousand echoes of that whispering gallery, where slander holds her court, and whose minutest breath, day after day, coupling the name of Martinuzzi with every variety of wilful falsehood, and detraction, broke on *her* ear, as with the voice of a trumpet, and worked like a poison, at her heart. Infected, from the earliest dawn of intellect, by all who approached her, with suspicions and distrust, of the character and designs of her guardian, who, in his administration of her affairs, had long confounded that office, with an authority not quite so legitimate, and who, though mild and courteous in his demeanour to others, was commonly absolute, and inflexible in his relation with herself,—notwithstanding all these concurrent causes to inspire her hatred, though her proud soul might tremble to its centre, before his determined and arbitrary will; yet, she knew, in her heart, she not only respected, but actually revered that man; yea, him, the despoiler of her mother's rights, and the probable usurper of her own diadem, and proper inheritance, she could not choose but revere. What was the charm, which bound down her free nature, as with bonds of iron? In what consisted the spell?—the ascendency, which, in her case, reversed the ordinary course of human feeling, and constrained her, not only to venerate,

but love, where her impassioned sense of injustice, and other powerful causes, seemed to prompt, and demand her abhorrence? This was an inquiry, which, though herself scarcely conscious of the extent, and depth of her sentiment towards Martinuzzi, our heroine would sometimes put to her own bosom, without its ever meeting with a satisfactory reply. Still, with the fitfulness, natural to her sex, her childish indignation, at the peremptory proceedings of the regent, would, at times, break out; and now, when all things seemed to intimate, that he meant shortly to put the seal, to his long course of dissimulation and intrigue, by himself wearing the crown of her royal father, whilst he would fain disguise his ambition, by the thin pretence of a bull of his holiness, her exasperation had grown to its height; her indignation at his ingratitude and artifice, almost conquered the predilection, we have spoken of above, a predilection, which took a sort of sanctity from those endearing associations and impressions, linked in her grateful memory, with Martinuzzi's early and continued tutelage. It was under the influence of this combined feeling of anger and respect, that our heroine was surprised, at meeting with her guardian in her ante-chamber. Having premised thus much, let us beat back.

"Seat thee, my child; thou tremblest," said Martinuzzi; and Czerina mechanically availed herself of a settee, near the open casement. The regent again spoke; "A short while since, fair lady," he said, bending a searching glance upon the young queen; "I observed, as the last beams of the sun bathed in golden light, the waving tresses of the linden groves, — five minutes cannot have elapsed,—two shadows, thrown, by the planet's slanting rays, on yonder opposite terrace,—thy flowing robe, the high and national plume, that waves so proudly on thy sunken head,—thy light and buoyant air, shaped restless darkness, on the glowing parapet; the *one*, could not be mistaken,—whose form was it, that the horizontal

sun traced on the stone canvass, by thy side?" Czerina's cheek burned, whilst her dimpled lip grew colourless, as death's, but remained closed. Bowing low her fair face, she embedded her one hand, in her profuse ringlets. There was an embarrassing pause, which Martinuzzi terminated, by resuming: "For more than a minute, the forms, I speak of, must have remained unmoved, amid the motes, that danced in the western ray:" he paused, but almost instantly added, in a deep imperative voice, "Still mute, lady? Some cavalier, I need not tell you, judging by his erect and stately bearing, darkened the light beside you; and you are silent. He was no Hungarian born, for the high head lacked our plumy kalpac. Be pleased to remember, Lady Czerina," he added, with a slightly admonitory gesture, "what befits your dignity; what is due to our age and office, and no longer hold this unseemly silence." There was again a short pause; "I knew not," presently subjoined Martinuzzi, scarce audibly, whilst his features shone with a faint smile; "I knew not, the secretary of Piadena had the privilege of these gardens." A quick sudden rush of confusion spread over the face of Czerina; she drew a deep and long gasp, and half rising, stammered in a voice, but little above her breath.

"The gentleman met me, and I—I ——," she grew inarticulate; for she felt the tell-tale blood coursing under her temple, cheek, and burning bosom, with sensibility, and with consciousness.

"It was a dangerous imprudence, my child," said Martinuzzi, with mild emphasis; "God!" he presently continued, in a deep tone, but so low as to be almost inaudible; "when,—oh! when will the cloud of these evil mysteries roll away, before the blaze of thy mercy, and we emerge, from shadows and enigmas,* to behold the truth manifest?" Then turning to Czerina, he said;

* "Videmus nunc per speculum in ænigmate."—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

" Lady, I am weary of tutorage, and I find the people are grown no less tired, to see the sainted crown, under the shadow of his hand, whose brow, the precious jewel was not made to fit.—Well well,—I wander, for a moment,—there, sit down again, child; I have words to drop into your heart, which are the fruit of long, and painful thought; for thee, fair lady; for thee, and this vexed land. The time is come. when thou shouldst give a king to Hungary: a friend, protector, to thyself. I have consulted for thy happiness,—he, whom thou shalt gift with thy royal hand is one, who, ——" the Right Reverend Father had been let proceed thus far, without interruption; but he was now silenced, by a piercing exclamation, from his fair auditor.

Oh, woman! who as much exceedest man in apprehension, as in sensibility, whose whole existence and education merge in thy sex, whose immaterial nature, and physical structure alike indicate ηδονη, .. alike point to love, as thy sole end, aim, and scope of being!* Why is thy mate so unworthy of thee? and why is it, his presumption arrogates a superiority, being mentally, at the best, only thy peer? and in soul;—in all that constitutes the poetry, the grace of humanity, so immeasureably thine inferior?—The few words of Martinuzzi went to the heart of Czerina; and, as we are taught to believe, that, in another world, glimpses of felicity will suddenly open to us, which transcend all finite comprehension; so the simple sentence, which struck on the ears of our heroine, broke up for her, the deep, and sealed fountain of her soul, discovering a new sense, which must be the making, or the marring of her future life. She could no longer pretend to disguise from her own consciousness, the reality, the strength, and the intensity of her passion for Ferraro. All the hopes, fears, desires, every vernal faculty, and feeling, which had of late made populous the

* Enim ratioque excellens, et figura corporis significant, ad hanc unam rem natam feminam, ut frueretur voluptatibus.— Cicero.

still, and dim-lighted chambers of her heart, and which had been there hoarded, like the treasure of the dreaming miser, unseen and uncounted, as by a flash of lightning, were suddenly revealed to her mental vision, like shapes at the invocation of the sorcerer; and she knew, that the god had been with her, and had smitten her, and that she loved,—but along with this conviction came the terrible certainty, that she was threatened to be consigned to another; —not to Ferraro, who had furtively obtained possession of her young affections, but to the object of her guardian's choice, who was no other, according to common report, than his nephew. Against such arbitrary dictation, her passions remonstrated, and the blood of all her ancestry rose up, tingling in her veins, and swelling at her heart. We all, somehow or other, object to compulsion, even when it is meant in kindness; and, in our young days especially, we are apt to have a marvellous overweening motion of our competence to direct our own affairs; more particularly as to our conduct in that nice, and important article, love or matrimony. Our fair heroine, be it understood, was not a whit less a stickler for her rights, than any gentle reader of this history, being of the same age and sex; and, considering her royal habits and caprices, we are not sure, whether she would not outvie them all in that essential resource, on occasion, which the dear creatures think spirit, and the satirical call, *temper*. In this instance, this bias of her nature was strongly backed and fortified, by her penchant for Ferraro; and she internally resolved to show fight, and stand up, like a heroine, for her prerogatives of every description. There is nothing like a good heart, at a straight; and Czerina half wondered at her own courage, as she broke in upon her guardian's speech, by exclaiming, in a voice, which, like the incarnate passion of the poet, trembled at its own fervour, and shrunk even at the sounds created by itself.

"What would you have me do?—marry?"

"Ay, marry, lady, would I," returned Martinuzzi, with some surprise.

Czerina rose erect, on her seat, as though she sat on her throne. Shaking aside the glorious curls, that clustered over her high, pure forehead, she looked her guardian full in the face, as, extending her hand towards him, and speaking in a firmer, if not a deeper tone, than before, she thus addressed him: "Then take my answer, once for all, your eminence; when I possess, indeed, what I was born to, it will be time enough to talk of marriage; and then, my lord, I shall be empowered to choose, at once, a husband for myself, and kingdom. Understand that, as yet, I do account myself divided, and am much too wise to cheat myself, and him, be he whosoe'er he may, whom thou wouldst have me call my husband. I have little providence, or constancy—or say I have; what I have, I care not to bestow; so whoso wins me, may not choose to wear. If I seem good, or fair, why I am not so—not proper to be loved —or— in short, your eminence, know, I am a woman, who will not be lightly won; and recollect, besides, that though our temples yet are naked, we are the queen of Hungary:— and none, none, sir, be he the proudest in our land, shall stoop the royal sceptre so low, as to dispose, without our consent, of the hand of our father's child."

Czerina's rapid and energetic expostulation, here came to a pause, more, as it seemed, for want of breath than words. The hurried impulse of her articulation, communicated an additional tinge of crimson, to the mantling colour of her face and neck, where the whole Magyar blood, of her minute and fairy form, seemed, for a moment, to vault: her eyes flashed a determination, which meetly corresponded, with the decided seriousness of her gesture and language. The energy of her will, roused by the unusual excitement, united with her natural charms, in spite of the delicate character of her loveliness, to throw a sublime and imposing animation, over

her appearance. She, who ever, till that moment, seemed of too infantile a temper, to imagine a harsh thought, or give vent to an intemperate word, now appeared to have grown, at once, beyond her size and years: her whole soul swelled with the stateliness of her avowed resolution, and her sympathising frame glowed, and expanded into majesty.

Martinuzzi turned away, and paced up and down the apartment, for several seconds, seemingly lost in reverie; then retiring within the arch of the deep-sunk casement, he looked forth on the evening, and, as if soliloquizing with himself, murmured, scarce audibly: "Ah! I see; this day is wasted down to the dregs—is overlived; the fountains of the hallowed light * spring silently and slowly, and the tide of beamy noon, hath fled up to the arch, and sleeps—how near its source! (my child, look yonder) past those amber clouds, (do you observe) which seem the rocks of that most glorious ocean shore. I must be gone."

Martinuzzi moved from the window, and then resumed:

"Fare-thee-well. You said, Lady Czerina, we should have further converse, touching this matter—those were your words. Did you not say so?"

"No, indeed," replied Czerina, while she felt her heart throb high, in her breast, and her little foot bespoke her irritable mood, by its rapid glancings, on the polished floor: "I declared that I would never—"

"True, true, my child," interrupted the cardinal, with stern emphasis; "I remember; you said, that you would marry, and so give a king to the *Magyar ország*;† you said, it was enough, since it was my counsel—MINE—do you mark?—your guardian's counsel; and you said, you would abide by it."

Czerina's pride, and self-will, could ill endure this des-

* See the Medea of Euripides, v. 411, 12.

† The Magyar kingdom.

potic resolution, of her guardian, to control her affections, and dispose of her hand, contrary to her inclinations. Her respiration was very audible, as she warmly answered: "I pray you no more of this; you urge me too far, my lord cardinal. I never even thought the words you speak for me. Suffer me, your eminence, to withdraw."

Czerina arose, and, making a low *congé*, was on the point of leaving the apartment, when the short, stern tones of her guardian's voice, arrested her footsteps.

"Lady! how's this? I bid thee go not. Stay! I command you. Stay!" he repeated, with increased vehemence, "lest your course lead to the scaffold."

Czerina turned back, and approaching some few paces nearer, where the regent stood, there paused, whilst an angry blush overspread her countenance, as if through impatience at being detained.

Martinuzzi again spoke, but more mildly; "Have I not stilled the restless glass of time, to talk with thee, the while, and wilt thou leave me?"

"Forgive me," said Czerina; "but I liked not the subject of your discourse. I cannot wed, at present; no, indeed."

"And why so, fair lady?"

"Because, as I have said, it is my will," answered the maiden proudly; "so importune me not, sir."

"This to me!" exclaimed the regent.

"Why not?" began Czerina, when, meeting the melancholy gaze of her guardian, fixed upon her, with an inscrutable expression, a feeling came over her, which she could not analyze, and she instantly broke off, merely adding, in a softened and deprecatory tone, "yet no, not to thee;"—then half-averting her countenance, to hide the tear, that had started to her eye, she repeated; "Not to thee. Oh! pardon me, your eminence."

"Lady," said Martinuzzi, speaking in a deep, and so-

lemn voice, yet with an abstracted air, as if communing with himself, rather than replying to her: "Life slips from underneath us; eternity lieth in wait, dragging down centuries, generations, empires, into its abysm. A regenerative principle is carrying on, for ever, extracting from the sepulchral womb of earth, its sterile quality, and, out of the very corruption of vitality, presenting the seeds of life and renovation, perpetually revivifying the system of creation; reproducing, again and again, until time shall be no more, from materials continually overworn, the countless generations of the children of Adam. 'Tis the catenation; the pre-ordained cycle of vitality; and thus the quick and the dead, are in everlasting correspondence. There is nought stationary in the renewal and revolution of ages;* though hours, minutes, seconds, fly not by our wisdom, nor wait for our resolves; even now they lag not, as I tarry here; but all things to be done i' the state, are held suspense the while; and, lest it prove so, when my span of life shall have wasted to the grave, let's now be stirring, lady. Power hath no spell to trim the wings of time, to accommodate his speed to our caprice, to chain him down, as was once fabled, while slaves ran riot, or slept away from action,—to say unto him, 'hitherto shalt thou come—here shall thy proud course be stayed,' while men lie dreaming. No,—time, like the fowl, knoweth his appointed way, and, like the fowl, doth migrate from the abodes of mindless man, and flutter from the world, unnoticed, undetained; but the affairs of such as, sitting

* The above was suggested by the following passage from Massilon: "Une revolution entraine tout dans les abimes de l'eternité les siècles, les generations, les empires, ainsi les ages se renouvellent, ainsi le monde change sans cesse, ainsi les morts et les vivants se succedent, et se remplacent continuellement. Rien ne demeure." Pour la Bened. des Drapeaux du Regiment de Catinat.

See also Ovid. Met. xv. v. 179, 186.

still, do draw the breath of vital air in dreams, are sterile as the *Turkische grange*,* o'er which the carrion, and edacious bird † hath ta'en his viewless flight. Let *us* not draw the breath of vital air in dreams, but act."

He paused, and then abruptly turning to the maiden, inquired, "When will you receive your lover as your husband?—Say."

Czerina advanced, with a proud, determined step, close up to the regent. The rays of the setting luminary, striking obliquely on her transparent temple, tinted it with his own warm hues, and even seemed to have lent a portion of his intolerable splendour to her eyes. Her carriage was haughty, and her rich voice, attuned by the impulses of her spirit, rang through the chamber, like the breathing of the celestial wind, along the chords of some harp æolian, as she made answer—"I said I'd hear no more of this: am I to speak again? I will not. Nay, who art thou? My dead father's steward, entrusted by his faith, and bounty, with the glorious burden of the state, till years have made his daughter fit for such a bearing, and she relieve you of it. However familiar with depths of government, your sagest counsel is no more than due and loyal service. I pray you, my lord cardinal, be satisfied. Content ye, sir, though we desire your best directions, we'll not bear tyranny; nor, if I were disposed, would Erdély suffer it. Nay, frown not on me, my lord. Have you further business? I will NOT

* Turkish grange—a tract of country between Transylvania and Turkey. Grange is equivalent to our word marches. It is a vast *steppe*, which it would be difficult to redeem from the shoals of sand covering its surface.

† Edacious bird—the gólya, or stork. The whole figure is an allusion to the sudden disappearance from Hungary of this favoured and domestic bird of passage. "It is an universal opinion among the lower classes of the Hungarians," says that accomplished linguist, Dr. Bowring, "that the storks pass their winter in Turkey."—See "Poetry of the Magyars."

wed to please you. Now, once for all, you have my answer." She ceased, and resumed her seat.

Martinuzzi did, indeed, knit his brow; a flush, like the passing brightness of the sun, shot athwart his countenance; he fixed his eyes keenly on her unabashed forehead, as if to reach her heart, and dissect its capillary fibres; whilst the intonation of his voice grew on her ears, like the deep base of the cataract.—"Your answer, froward girl!" he cried. "Be for ever silent, rather than speak the language, I abhor. Oh! take heed—take heed, I say. Never to me, with such authority, proclaim thy rebel will! It is a crime as foul—fouler than common parricide, to blast my hopes, to shrivel up the freshness of my heart, with such accursed lightnings as thou dartest, even now, from thy unrighteous eye."

Czerina recoiled before the tempest she had raised. The blood, which, the instant before, filled every vein in her cheeks and forehead, now retreated to her heart; her eye quailed, under the penetrating look, she encountered; and while involuntary apprehension, and a wish to appear unmoved, strongly contended, in her feeble voice, and self-doubting deportment, she faltered out—"My lord, I will not be terrified."

"No word!" thundered Martinuzzi, suddenly grasping her arm—"no word, lady!" he repeated, with a look of mysterious, but terrible import, "or by the omnipotence of my tongue! I will, with thee, from our proud giddy height,... the frightful precipice of glory that we stand on *—plunge headlong down, into the gulf beneath. We're lifted to the brink, and, at our feet, a grave of infamy unfathomable yawns, ready to receive, and shiver us to atoms. Yea, they shall wreathe about thy delicate white limbs a rusty chain, which, like a snake, enamoured of thy loveliness, shall gnaw a passage

* Cette haute elevation est un precipe affreux.—Bossuet.
In ipsam gloriam præceps agebatur.—Tacitus, Agric. cap. 41.

to thy very core, and bask beside it. Lady, be not confident; rather show me the repentant, and trembling bosom, the pale lip, the quaking hand, the mercy-seeking eye—or, by my holy faith! thou shalt not live, so proud and beautiful. Tempt not a wrath as hot as flames of hell, lest—there *is* a word.—Fool! I can make thee nothing, but a laugh."

The firmness of the young queen wholly gave way under the positive terror of that moment. "Mercy!" she faltered out, looking as pale as death, and trembling in every joint—"oh God!" she continued, "the absolute charm thou hast, to force me to regret my thoughtless words, though wrung from my lips, by thy strange tyranny! But, in pity, spare me now, and say no more. Let me depart."

"Depart not!" returned Martinuzzi, with the same deep, stern, startling tone, he before adopted. "Go not, at your peril! Am I not speaking? Depart, indeed! Rather, when I utter sounds, kneel down,—down on the hard earth, and strive to catch them, as a thirsty wretch doth spread a mantle to entrap the dew. Garland thy memory, girl, with all the syllables, that grow upon my lips. Oh! I am dear to thee," and the voice of the cardinal sensibly softened; "as to the sea-flower is the rock, whereon the blossom clings throughout the storm."

"Oh! peace—peace, your eminence, for the love of Heaven!" implored Czerina.

"Then, never more," continued Martinuzzi, "from this day and hour, never again, young lady, with insolent eye, lip curled in scorn, and wicked brow of smooth and vain imperiousness, dare to call to judgment a thought, a breath of Martinuzzi."

The poor girl listened, with an air of mingled anguish, and submission. "Spare me!" she said, with faltering voice, at the same time wringing her small, and beautiful hand towards the regent, as if imploring his compassion, "Oh! spare me, for the present."

"How soon may I be proud to have you wed? I tell you, the life of Hungary depends upon these espousals."

"When you will," again gasped out our broken-spirited heroine, with a sort of charmed submission. "By-and-bye."

There followed a long pause. The colour had faded wholly in the cheek of Czerina, and her feelings were so utterly exhausted, by the very efforts exerted to control them, that, unless the opportune relief of a violent flood of tears, had spent the internal struggle, she felt, she must have gone off into a swoon. Meanwhile, Martinuzzi moved several times, to and fro, in the chamber, absorbed in the musings of his own mind. Once, pausing, he fixed his eyes, for a moment, on the distressed young queen, whose stretched heart-strings seemed ready to crack asunder. Then he resumed his abstracted walk; but, presently, a second time halted, and, as he gazed intently, upon the face of the weeping damsel, strange traces of indescribable emotions swept, like shadows, across his pale features. "Fastidious thing!" he murmured, in seeming scorn, but with a lip that quivered violently. "'Tis certain I was born to rule without thee. Well — who knows? — perhaps 'twere better — happier too — poor child!" he continued, relapsing from his previous tone, into one of deep melancholy; "how lovely! and how like! does that fragile frame, that fine and feminine piece of nature promise another Atlas, fit to heave with the heaven of empire? Can that dainty hand sway a red-hot sceptre?—that heart, so quick and violent, fluttering like a young bird, at the rustling leaf erewhiles, and which now withers, like the vernal rose, beneath the southern airs* — can that heart endure the weight, the cares of sovereignty? Oh! it were better," he continued, in a low deep voice, "thou droop-

* "Pubentesque rosæ primos moriuntur ad austros."—Statius *Sylvarum*, lib. 3.

ing, pale exotic! — far better, I ween, at this instant, to bewail thy blight, in all the buds of thy promise, and all the leaves of thy spring, than have, in after years, to mark thy root unearthed; and thee,—a monument of wretchedness and blast,—left to be trod down in the highway of the world, or, worse, to witness the slow rivelling, bending, snapping, at the sapless core, which, under the chilling, formal details of thy gilded destiny, will all but break, yet lingeringly beat on. I have judged ill — mistakenly. Better, a thousand times better, were it, that God's lightning, had found thee, ere thy birth, than for it now to strike, and sear thy endiademed brow,—to lose thy tiara, were little.—*Thy demission is decreed!* but — well — let the infidel rave, and Ferdinand fly to arms: I can and must reign, in despite of both, do what they will: the purple cleaves to me, like Nessus' poisoned shirt — but thou! thou weeping passion-bud! what will become of thee? Methinks, I now could mourn for thee. But down, my torn heart! Time and Fate! — all may yet be well; and, come what will to *me*, so that she — yes — yes — 'time and chance happeneth to all.'"* Martinuzzi ceased to speak aloud, but his lips still moved. He came up directly in front of Czerina, and gazed on the pale countenance of the overpowered maiden, for more than a minute, with intense and mournful tenderness. "Adieu, fair lady!" He paused, as a faint smile fell upon his cold features; but the smile was of a serious cast, resembling the ineffectual light, which heaven sends through the stained glass of a cathedral, on some stone effigy within. "Tell Ferraro, when you see him, I knew not, he was envoy from the court of Paphos,—nay, cheer thee!—If I spoke words that pained, think them unsaid. Jaded and vexed thoughts of these unquiet times fret me, and will sometimes strike from out my flinty nature, those sparkles of

* Ecclesiastes.

heat, which yet I mean not. So now, farewell! — Think on my wish, though ——— "

Czerina, making an effort to collect herself, lifted up her blue and beaming eyes; a melancholy light played on the April heaven of her face, whilst "the heart's rain" trickled on her guardian's hand,

"And pale, through tears suppressed, the mournful beauty smiled." *

Repressing her emotion in its crystal sluice, she rose, and in as firm a tone as she could assume, meekly made answer, "I will consider, sir."

"That's a brave lady," rejoined Martinuzzi, lifting up his hands in the attitude of benediction. "Bless thee! Thy scalding tear-drop sears like molten lead; but sit, and compose thee, daughter." Saying these words, he kissed the forehead of the Queen of Hungary, and, after looking at her again, as if agitated by a variety of contending feelings, with slow and pensive step he retired from the apartment.

Left to herself, Czerina gazed intently after him, and the next minute sank motionless in her place. This trying scene with her guardian, so fraught with various and incongruous feelings, left one compounded impression on the mind of our heroine, which was indelible, and might be difficult to parallel. Martinuzzi's heart-quelling fury, one instant, and his extreme tenderness, that savoured of an ambiguous sensibility, the next, alike thrilled and startled her. He stood before her, like some tower that Heaven's angry bolts had, at once, burst over and made sacred, and there was something portentous in the stern solemnity of his aspect, in the dignified severity of his piercing glance, that awed her very soul; his allusions to her having shortly to give a king to Hungary, in making her aware of the state of her affections, dashed from her mental vision the last scales of inexperience, and brushed away the fresh down of cheerfulness,

* Campbell.

for aye, from her sinless bosom. The bright day-dream that glittered, like the thin autumn film of gossamer in her path, had faded at a touch. Henceforth, for her, the gloss of extreme maidenhood was despoiled of all its magic, and much of its worth. She was no longer heart-whole, and what was more, she could not plead ignorance of her privation; the charm of life was fled — her peace of mind was out of her own custody, and dependent hereafter on the caprice of another. The self-enduring pride and untainted consciousness of virgin integrity, which had hitherto girt her round, as with a cestus, from this time forwards, relaxed its hold on her thoughts and her belief. In learning to love, she had lost all confidence in her own resources of mind and person; to outward observance she looked the same, but she felt, that inly it was different, and that the current of her being was changed,—that the romance,—the dreamy halo of her days and nights was clouded, or at least, that a change had come "o'er the spirit of her dream." She feared she had been premature, and blamed herself for her unfeminine precipitancy, in gifting another with the stewardship of her happiness, ere she had ascertained, beyond a shadow of uncertainty and doubt, that she was the depositary of his. 'Tis well for the trade in hearts to be free, and without a drawback. "Restrictions," as Lord Shaftesbury says of wit, "reduce it to a low ebb," yet the liberality should not be all on one side; like every other species of free trade, it is all the better, for being reciprocal. The eyes of Ferraro had, undoubtedly, long since, "told a flattering tale" to the encountering and timid gaze of the young queen; but the eyes of lovers are proverbial fib-tellers, and credulous must that maiden be, beyond the extensive license of her immature experience, who would read their poetical apocrypha for gospel.

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that several days went over, ere Czerina acquired resolution to encounter

Ferraro. Now that she was awakened to a precise sense of her sentiments in his behalf, she learned to tremble at her positive partiality, and felt, as it were, disrobed of her very innocence, in having conducted herself with such inconsideration and easy credulity. Thus it always happens,—and therein is involved, a paradox and an anomaly in morals. While we are "fancy free," we can "pass on," through the slippery vale of this phantasmal scene, without doubt or hesitation, in perfect assurance of our own uprightness, and our safety; but the moment, our eyes be opened to the occult meaning and character of what we hear and see, we start at the shadow of our own prurience, and the first taint of corruption at our hearts, is the natural beginning of the proprieties and decencies of behaviour. It is a just remark of Swift, and, like the generality of his remarks, characteristic of the dean himself, that "a nice man is a man of nasty ideas;" it may be analogously affirmed, that every modification or disguise of prudery and sexual delicacy, is only symbolical of the moral sense of shame, or the consciousness of some inward infirmity.

As we have said, Czerina kept herself close for several days, subsequent to the stormy dialogue, recorded in our last pages, and, in the interim, it should seem, her mother, Isabella, came to suspect the rash correspondence, between Ferraro and her daughter. The light of Heaven travels not so fast, as the tact of woman on such occasions. It is, as if experience, and knowledge, and reason, and calculating thought, and the spirit of prophecy were to centre, with incalculable force, in a single apprehension,—were to be all blended, and coiled into one instinct, whose intuitive result, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, lapped heart, sense, and soul, in its own unerring light. With hardly any data to go upon, she, nevertheless, caught, from the delphi of her breast, the ruin of all those golden fabrics, which possession, passion, and a poetic temperament, seemed to have

based on adamant, though it was only "thin air;" such faith hath first love in his visioned castles! Ferraro had ceased to join her as was his wont, and when, by chance they met, he was no longer the same; his manner was regulated even to the intonation of his voice. His warmth, the earnestness of his address, the flashes, the irregular outbursts of his genius were either wholly extinguished, or subdued into form, and that liquid eloquence of thought, which ever seemed too over-brimming for mere human utterance to compass and embody, was now shaped and qualified, into the set and conventional tone and diction of society, and immanacled by the proprieties of speech, as the wretched victims of Procrustes were, by his inflexible bedstead. It was Ferraro; but, alas! the soul,—that which John of Zapola had wanted, that which made Ferraro what he was, in the eyes of Isabella, that emanation of his nature, which was all the difference to her,—had departed;

"'Twas Greece, but living Greece no more."

What can equal the pangs, the remorse of the heart, which beats under a woman's robe; or compare to her burning shame at the discovery, when, there, where she had garnered up her affections, she is discarded? What but her rage, and her revenge! when she finds, that possession, which, with her, had endeared and exalted the object of her attachment, and sublimed the quiet emotion of love, into a species of voluptuous idolatry, has, on the other hand, stripped from the passion of her adorer, the desire, which was its *principium*, its only source, and left the feeble, and satiated inclination to "sink, by slow decay," or to be suddenly strangled by some newer phantasy of the senses, *as eternal and as short-lived;*—when she experiences, how light is man's love, how abundant in promise, how futile in performance!—can we blame her, if, in the thick and midnight darkness, which gathers on her soul, when Etna rages in her heart, and the blood rushes madly, like lava, through

her veins, she dash down from off the self same altar, where, but a short time since, she had flung the holy incense of all gentle and woman aspirations, the divinity of love, and lighting at his torch the firebrand of Nemesis, raise that fearful form* on the fragile base? Thus it fared with Isabella: her passions burned fiercely as ever; but, alas! though the flame was blown with sighs from the same source, it was kindled at a different shrine. Venus, indeed, throbbed in every vein,..she was still the Teraphin, the idol, before which her soul bowed down; but it was Venus, the goddess of jealousy!† At first, however, Isabella refused to listen to the stinging information, conveyed by that involuntary faculty of which we have spoken; the revolution of sentiment was too dreadful,—the consequences to her peace too immense and incalculable, to let her, unresistingly, admit the possibility of Ferraro's perfidy: nay, nay, she wrestled against her intuitive suspicions; she obstinately steeled herself against her own convictions — those exquisite emotions, which were as blossoms in her path, to turn to asps to sting her where she trod! It could not be,..it shall not—it must not,..thus, to the last moment, will we cling to that self-delusion, which makes our moral atmosphere, and, amissing which, we wither and die. We go on, blind and darkling, through this "unsubstantial pageant," and not before the finishing of the secret spell of fate, will the false creation break up, and "the ignorant fumes, that mantle our clearer reason," be chased away. Like the predestined solver of the sphinx's snare, we would fain shirk, and hold off the oracles, sprung from earth's womb, whilst, undyingly, they hover over us. We bribe our secret conviction, by some lurking subterfuge of the imagination, and blink the

* Φοβερον προσωπον.—Æschylus.

† Venus, the goddess of Jealousy; I may as well give my authority, Valerius Flaccus, B. 2, or, rather, his authority, Apollonius Rhodius, B. 1. ver. 793.

rays of truth, as if, like motes of torrid sunshine, by darting on us too directly, they may occasion a brain fever; and it were better thus, for it were to be unconscious, and the old Grecian said right, that not to feel were oft the sweetest being. Even dull insensibility might be deemed a blessing, compared to those soul-torturing pangs,..those fine hair balancings of jealousy and desire, which oscillated in the bosom of Isabella. The illusive idea of Ferraro was, unto her, as a mirror, which, erst would image miraculous shapes of rosy joys and softest reminiscences, but which now, shivered to fragments, reflected, on every side, in a thousand prismatic hues, one hellish, multitudinous array of shames and agonies.

Oh! wisely did Pausanias affirm of that fabled fount,* whose property it was, to wash from the hearts of all who laved therein, the most minute particle of passion, and

> "Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart,"

that its waters were more precious than gold, since they realized the aim, but not the hope, of philosophy herself. Isabella believed not in such idle legends, neither to her did magic verse or expiatory fire† offer a remedy. For a time, however, she remained in ignorance of the fact of having a rival. She only shook before the wind of vain surmises, which the indifference of Ferraro excited, without apprehending the cause. Well had it been, had she never come to know it, — had she never experienced, like Prometheus, the consequences of filching from heaven forbidden fires, — had she never felt her heart

* Selemnus; the virtues of which river, had it been located near Dunsinane, Macbeth would not have exchanged for the gold of Ophir.— See Paus. Achaicis.

† "Nulla recantatas deponent pectora cura,
Nec fugiet vivo sulphure victus amor."—Ovid.

chained, by the adamantine bands of necessity, to the cold rock ; or the vulture, jealousy, with ravenous beak, eat into her liver.

But let us to our tale. A few days following that memorable night, when the holy edifice of St. Theresa became, so to speak, desecrated by that brief colloquy between the queen and her paramour, which Ragotzy, Sigismund, and his keeper, happened to overhear, Isabella issued forth, from the portals of the palace, and insensibly directed her meditative steps, towards those unfrequented labyrinths of flowering shrubs, which conducted to the fatal pavilion, we have heretofore commemorated. Of late, Isabella had sedulously avoided taking that walk. The moments of past delight were converted into galling recollections, and the joys, which the scene of assignation conjured up so palpably before her mental vision, were too nearly neighboured by present affliction, for her to endure the retrospect. As she musingly measured one of the sequestered parterres that, lined out through the royal plaisance, winded beautifully beneath the shades, produced by the complicated branches of Linden trees, she caught the voices of two persons conversing not far off, whose indistinct accents whizzed at first upon her ear, with startling effect, and presently shot into her soul, like red-hot missiles. The speakers were evidently slowly approaching, from an intersecting path, and, being far from desirous to encounter any one, in her then state of irritable despondency, Isabella slid behind the row of Linden trees, under which she walked, and was immediately lost, beneath the gloom of one of those bosquets, with which the grounds were studded ; the woven leaves and branches, by which she found herself overshadowed, attempering the radiance of the noon-day sun into a soft twilight, rendered even his breath cool, and refreshing.

In that plot of shrubbery, she prepared herself to crouch, till the persons, she wished to avoid, should pass

by. It might have been a minute ere they came up; and every tardy step sent gathered agony upon her heart. It was impossible, — and yet, oh G—d! where sleep thy thunderbolts? We shall leave it to the imagination of the reader, to conceive the consternation of the royal lady, at beholding the youth, she loved above the price of worlds, side by side, with her own daughter; apparently appealing to her, in those animated pourings forth, the wretched listener too well remembered, and too deeply appreciated. All the horrors of despair came thick upon her, but, however terrible the struggle, Isabella stood firm. With all the power of her will, she retained the vital principle in her frame, and though her throat swelled, and her breath came fast, and thick; though the very life-blood paused in her failing heart, and an ensanguined film darkened her sight, till the earth swam round and round, *she would not go raving mad.* The topic, which her lover and child were engaged in discussing, had evidently no ordinary interest for both. They advanced at that snail-pace, which we have sometime observed to be proper to young people, under certain circumstances; as, for example, when mammas and papas are a few steps *en avant;* and mammas and papas will so crawl and loiter, on these occasions, at every turn, that Sisyphus himself, despite his up-hill work, might give them the go-by. The soft, silvery tones, of the young queen, often died away inaudibly; but every word, that fell from the lips of her gallant, seemed to be so accurately pitched, as to drop into the ears of Isabella, like that "leperous distilment" with "Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected," that wrought death to the royal Dane.

With a strong mental exertion, Isabella stirred not from the shrubbery where she couched, but breathed hard, as if her life was struggling to escape through the ribs of flesh, that seemed, to the sufferer, to confine the maniac heart, like a straight waistcoat.

" Ferraro," sighed the low voice of Czerina, as she stooped her head forward, under pretence of trifling with some flowers, but, in reality, to allow time for the blush, which the confession of her feelings painted on her cheek, to fade away, — " you have provoked a truth, which, if, as you say, you love me,—nay, do not answer, till you've heard me out, — you are too rash by half. — I dare not trust you."

" Oh, my saint!" replied Ferraro, " all impassioned," * while his ardent love shone unveiled through his bright gaze, — " I will be gentle as the hand I touch; as moderate as the lips, from whose dear motions come scanty sounds of happiness. What have we to fear? whisper it, my own, my peerless queen; and I'll repose beneath thy chastening breath, as waves lie still and smooth beneath the light o'nights, and the distressing winds that chills their countenance. What is to fear? — art not supreme? Nay, more, thy hand I've had assured me, — I ask pardon, — provided thou consented."

" Ha! assured thee, indeed! — By whom, in Heaven's name!" exclaimed the lady, proudly; " who can have dared? — was't he?"

" He — who?" asked Ferraro, quickly, in an earnest voice.

" My guardian," said Czerina.

" Not the regent," answered Ferraro.

" Ah! Antoine, would to God! it had been," returned the royal maid, in a subdued tone; " for he, perhaps, — and 'tis of him I'd speak — alas! I cannot." Czerina broke off, and, turning aside, hung down her head in silence.

" Sweet lady," cried Ferraro, in a strain of passionate tenderness, " say the worst you know, or think, or shrink from. Am I not near thee? Nay, tell me, — dost thou mean sorrow? — sorrow, methinks, is beautiful to speak, and soft. What evil is to come, that sounds like evil,

* Milton.

now, in thy tender warning. Oh, it is sweet! — nay, stand thus," he added, taking her unreluctant hand, "I can behold no other sun. I'm blind with gazing, — yet say on. I love to hear of woe, and love thy voice; — say on."

"Not a word more; you make me smile, Ferraro," replied Czerina playfully, fondly pressing the palm of the youth beneath her throbbing bosom, whilst a slight blush, faint as the tint of the youngest leaf of the red rose, giving evidence alike of her transport, and her shame, started to her cheek: "feel what a trembling is in my heart; yet I will not fear;— and, if this be true, you tell me, meseems I can be just. But yet—" she stopped, and heaved, the while, that soft sigh, mellifluous, which is, at once, the breath and evidence of love. The secret volume of intelligence, opened to Ferraro in the electrical movement that preceded, now suddenly closed.

"Oh, that *but!*" he exclaimed, "tell me —"

"Well, listen, Antoine," resumed Czerina, stopping the question which was on his lips, still without exactly loosening the imprisoned hand, from its dangerous contact; "I would put the love, you say you bear me, to the test. On my return, after I left you last, I found my guardian seated in the ante-room, that looks upon the orangery."

"Whom?" interposed Ferraro.

"Cardinal Martinuzzi."

"Noble soul!" ejaculated Ferraro, with energy.

Czerina paused, and remained, for a little time, intensely thoughtful; then, withdrawing her hand, she rejoined with somewhat more coldness of manner, and in an altered, and heightened tone; "Even so, even so, sir; and why not add, right royal?"

"How! a subject royal?"

"A subject! well," she added, raising her voice, "I would inform you, if you will only hear me, what my guardian threatened—"

"Threatened, my queen!"

"That is the word."

Czerina again paused, and looked at Ferraro, whose eyes betokened angry surprise. The rose tint, which excitation had conjured to our heroine's cheek, died away into paleness.

"Am I grown faint, already?" she asked herself. "Let us proceed. The air is close, and the strong beams that dart directly on us, bring a weariness;—it must be that."

Ferraro was silent; and his fair companion, with clasped hands, thoughtfully followed the direction of the walk.

"Only observe, love," she presently subjoined, whilst the faint but meaning smile, that separated her coral lips, spoke a volume of deep feeling; "how yonder pines fall fast the sick leaves, they have worn to ruin! Ah, that's a parable!"

Whatever was the cause, a dark cloud crossed over Ferraro's clear countenance, lately animated with so much fire; but his lovely companion noted not the change.

"Lend me your arm, I pray, a few small moments," petitioned the fair maiden; "this noon-tide sun beams with a too oppressive splendour."

Ferraro, involuntarily fetched a single breath from the depths of his heart. "I have a life too much," he murmured, in a key, which bespoke him most enamoured.

No less earnest and tender was the suspiration of the royal maiden; "Keep it, then, for me, dearest Antoine!" she interjected, between their responsive sighs, casting down her conscious eyes upon the ground.

A minute more, and the cadence of the lovers — the broken and incoherent evidence of a passion, that could not be silent—died away, like plaintive music, in the distance.

It was long after they were out of hearing, ere Isabella stepped beyond that leafy screen, where she had lain *perdue*. Her ever handsome countenance, and royal

carriage, betrayed no appearance of change; her bright eye shone out as usual; no alteration could have been surmised by any one, who had beheld her; and yet, her nature had just undergone a revolution. Another soul seemed to have passed into her frame. Her first impulsion, as the fond voices of Czerina and Antoine broke on her ear, had been, to liberate one long, loud shriek, that impotently struggled in her throat; that natural inclination having been, at once, controlled, by a determined tension of mind and frame, strange as it may seem, her senses became wrapt up into a dulness; while a ravishing serenity,..a calm, such as, in all her life, she never remembered experiencing before, sunk insensibly, like a sweet sleep, upon her soul. She asked herself, what it meant? She placed her hand upon her heart, and questioned that heart, what had become of its late pains and passions? She explored, as it were, the dark realms of thought, and would have called, from out their misty cells and caves, into the light of life, those transports of rage and agony, which seemed proper to her hurt pride, and wounded tenderness. In vain; her pulse beat temperately, her faculties, though hard and cold as flints, were never more perfectly alive, than at that moment. The silver cord felt loosed, and the golden bowl all but broken; still the fabric of reason was not overturned, and the very intensity of her feelings, appeared to wrap her above the sphere of ordinary humanities. The truth was, that, in the depths of her soul, she darkly conceived the nature of the retribution, that, with a sort of silent afflatus, (if we may be allowed such a contradiction of terms) she vowed, and forecasted. The oracular vapour, welling up from the very sources of her being, to inspire her with vaticinal fury, was, so to speak, the combined orgasm of fibre and feeling, settling into an indistinct, but unquestioned resolution. The precise interpretation of her instinctive augury, was still in the gloom of the future,

but the exultant idea of vengeance, gave a species of decision to the feelings of Isabella, which she might, otherwise, have sought in vain. She owned an intuitive conviction, that the decretal voice would have early fulfilment; and this foreshadowing, of an ample and dire atonement, by neutralizing the first violence of her emotions, averted an impending exacerbation of passion, which, had it occurred, must have shaken her single frame, like to an earthquake. The relief she experienced was in proportion to the excess of that ebullition of despair, which previously threatened. Her nerves were strung for the conflict, when she found, instead of the full flow of an ungovernable wrath, the tide of passion, ebbing in the fibrous ducts and capillary vessels, about her heart. The halcyon peace settled in her bosom. That commensurate revenge, which danced in dim perspective before the vision of her mind, stilled the fierce commotion within; and the mere cessation, or rather the fading away of agony, into the remotest depths of her soul, proved, in its effects, a positive gratification. So true is it, that "La jalousie est finie sitot qu'on passe du doute à la certitude." *

As she drew near the palace, on her return, she beheld Ferraro, standing listlessly, at the bottom of the large, broad steps, which gave access to the main gateway of the building. On seeing her, he made a motion, as if he purposed turning off, into a more shaded and retired walk. This was a manœuvre, to which, during the last week, he had, more than once, had recourse; and, on those occasions, the pride and passion of Isabella, alike deterred her from obviously obtruding on him, her company; but, at present, by hastening her steps, she encountered the secretary, as he descended the marble stairs, which terminated the terrace, and thus precluded his effecting his instinctive purpose of avoidance. Ex-

* Rochefoucauld.

tending her hand towards him, as they joined company, with a smile of bitter, but hidden import, Isabella was the first to speak.

"Marc Antoine," she said; and as Ferraro inclined his head, with somewhat of obsequious formality, her curling lip owned a convulsive movement, so evanescent, that however defined and startling while it lasted, it left behind, a doubt whether it may not have been a deception,—"Marc Antoine, you need not shun me."—Then, after a moment's pause, she added, "You'll pardon my abruptness, sir; did I not behold you awhile ago, in earnest and familiar intercourse with,....with one, whose charms might well stagger a constant heart, and who in this land claims to be first?" The blood-red blush, that suffused the clear brow of Ferraro, was his only answer; but it spoke volumes of feeling.—"I suspected, when my ears first recognised those eloquent tones, there could be only one topic of sufficient interest to draw forth an effusion of soul, from so susceptible a young gentleman. 'Tis clear," continued Isabella, and a smile of bitterness came over her, as she said it, "you are in love again, Antoine,—nay, shrink not, man!—We cannot help our loves. My daughter is your aim. I'll swear it is no other."

"My aim?" repeated Ferraro, with no little embarrassment.

"Ferraro," rejoined Isabella, after a pause; "let us have done with subterfuge. By the merest chance, I involuntarily overheard your protestation. Come, come—what is there to blush at?"

For the first instant, the secretary seemed utterly abashed, at hearing so overwhelming an intimation; then, fancying, he discovered a blandness in the silvery tones of Isabella, he ventured to raise his eyes to the royal lady's countenance, and met with none of those portentous clouds, his conscience instinctively had prefigured. His resolution, which had just died away at his heart,

became immediately resuscitated. He spoke,—"Gracious lady, pardon —!" he could say no more.

"Wherefore, sir?" demanded Isabella. "Know," she added, after a pause, "that the infatuation of the woman is merged, henceforth, in the pride of station, and that the contempt of the queen regent unweaves the web, her folly twisted. Besides, owned I any angry sentiment, which it were absurd to imagine, you have contrived to carve for yourself so hard a fate, as might even satiate the mortification of an injured female,—and our sex, you know, are given out to be sore, on these occasions." And such was Isabella's mastery over her features, that she actually conjured a tranquil smile to her beautiful face, as if, in very truth, the current of the time were all unruffled. What she thought, we have no means of penetrating. What she looked, might be gathered from the response of Ferraro.

"Dear madam, this generous oblivion is worthy of your noble nature. But what hard fate can threaten, which thou canst not avert?"

Isabella was silent for some time, and then said in a low, quiet voice. "Dost thou not love the Lady Czerina?"

"Oh, more than my existence!" replied the impassioned youth.

"Really, sir! more than your existence? So much!" said Isabella, a slight smile curving her coral lips, and somewhat of sarcasm, though hardly perceptible, deepening her melodious tones. "If so, I'm sorry."

"Oh! wherefore sorry?" inquired Ferraro.

"Thou but runnest to thy confusion, Marc Antoine," replied the lady; "there are obstacles, invincible to the match, which you desire."

"Name them, madam," exclaimed Ferraro, with breathless anxiety, though in a feeble voice.

"The son of the late Peter Pereny, who furthered the plans of your royal master, by aiding Roccandolph in

the siege of Buda,—your memory may not reach so far,—but you must have heard of the man."

"He was a famed soldier, I believe," faintly responded Ferraro.

"If so, 'tis a boast his son cannot make," rejoined Isabella; "but whether so or no, 'twas rank corruption choked his loyalty to the house of Zapola. Wherefore, my daughter, Czerina de Zapola, is to be his son's bride; 'tis a thing of course, and suits the times."

"Can it not be prevented?" demanded Ferraro, with an inquiring eye.

"How so!" exclaimed Isabella; "the cardinal has taken his oath of it,—a cardinal's oath! think of that!—Martinuzzi's oath!—prevented indeed!"

"Art thou not her mother?" said the secretary.

"And what is that to Martinuzzi?" returned Isabella, while an astute smile passed over her handsome features.

"Oh God!" cried Ferraro.

The royal lady turned her head aside, to hide the expression of scorn, which she feared, her features too conspicuously exhibited. Hatred, in that instant, arose in its most viperous shape, fanged by the remembrance of their former love, and envenomed by present contempt. That distillation of her heart,* was, sooth to say, immortal, but the peculiar and diabolical appearance, that illumined, whilst it distorted, her countenance, at the moment of its birth, was far briefer than words may paint it. They were silent for awhile.

"Alas!" exclaimed the young secretary at length, "how I have done you injustice! I was led to believe, you purposed sacrificing the Lady Czerina, to the embraces of the sultan Solyman. I see 'tis no such thing; and for Pereny—it cannot be; she herself will not consent; she declared to me, she would die first."

* Καρδίας σταλαγμός.—The Eumenides of Æschylus, ver. 753.

"DIE!" repeated Isabella, with solemn significance; "and did she talk that?—how fine!—So the word was 'DIE,' sir, was it?" As she thus interrogated, a shade of paleness came over her royal brow, like the almost imperceptible sign of some inward spasm.

"Madam?" said Ferraro.

"Well," rejoined Isabella, "I see no help; the regent is pledged to his kinsman."

"He cannot be such a tyrant," cried Ferraro.

"Tyrant, did you say?" replied Isabella: "Oh, no tyranny in the least! only he is a man, who, whilst he lives, will not be said nay. Tyrant! what an idea! It is well, however, that he hears you not; for myself I should be glad, in respect ——," she paused a moment, and then added in a tone, that thrilled through every nerve of her hearer; "in respect to the love I bear you, that it were otherwise; but I see no help." At the word 'love,' a slight flush came over the cheek of Ferraro, and he could not help starting, as if the term owned a sound of fear. He looked in the face of the speaker, to ascertain whether any latent meaning lurked in the expression; but her features were in perfect repose, and her eyes beamed with kind and gentle lustre.

"Love!" he involuntarily echoed, in a low and hesitating tone.

"Ay, love!" repeated the lady, with unchanging voice; "'tis a word of many meanings. Ferraro," she presently subjoined, more seriously, "I know not malice. Would that Martinuzzi ——, but the man's an enchanter, and holds a spell over your destiny,—so 'tis vain hoping. When was he ever known to change his purpose? There is no power in speech or prayer, that can prevail with *him*."

After a long pause, during which they approached the fatal grotto, Isabella again spoke: "I must here leave you, my friend," she said, "we shall meet again. Ah!

Antoine," she added significantly, as she turned away, with a graceful reverence, in the direction of the palace; "*Martinuzzi is your evil genius!*"—And Isabella proceeded to that interview with Abu Obeidah, which we narrated at the opening of this chapter.

MANUSCRIPT XIX.

" Thou must speak that which, in its darkest hour,
Pushed to extremity midst ringing dizziness,
The ear of desperation doth receive
And I *must listen to it.*"

Miss Baily's *Rayner.*

" Le vœu d'Angèle fut exaucé. Tout à coup au sein d'une lumière éclatante, au milieu des chœurs celestes, la Sainte Vierge se presenta à Angèle avec l'ame de sa bien heureuse sœur."

Vie de Sainte Angèle, à l'usage des Religieuses Ursulines.

We must recur to a former manuscript, where Martinuzzi, after evincing considerable hesitancy, and trepidation, passed through an inner door of his presence chamber, into an adjoining apartment. This was a lofty octagonal room, stained and delapidated by time, and hung with cobwebs. The compartments were occupied with dark leathern hangings, in tolerable preservation, gilded and stamped, to represent the principal acts of the Apostle of the Gentiles, from his miraculous conversion to Christianity, to his decapitation in the capital of the world. It contained two narrow gothic windows, dismantled, and open to wind and weather. These were deeply indentured into the wall, and divided by heavy stone shaftwork, into arched compartments, whose interstices were

nearly choked up, by the luxuriant ivy, and other insidious plants, which crept on the outside; hence, it followed, that a very dubious twilight forced its way into the chamber, even at noon day, but at this hour, the melancholy light seemed only calculated to display, in yet more fantastic and anomalous outline, the embossed figures, that appeared to project in high relief, from the tapestry of the room. A traditionary and bloody tale had been transmitted from generation to generation, and was connected with the history of this octagonal apartment, on which account it was devoutly given out to be haunted, and there were not many individuals, living in that castle, endowed with such uncommon courage, as not to tremble and turn pale, at having to cross its threshold, after dusk.

It was towards the close of day, and the evening set in stormy, with wind and occasional rain, as the regent passed into this room. He was utterly void of the superstitious fears and prejudices of the times, and if his limbs shook, as he ventured into the comparative darkness, it was with far different apprehensions, than those suggested, by aught belonging to the world of shadows. The breastplate and helmet of a stranger glittered, in the dim and declining light of evening, by whose aid Martinuzzi was enabled to discern him, in the first instance, standing with his back to the wall, at the extremity of the chamber, but on the entrance of the regent, he came forwards.

"I was detained till now," began Martinuzzi, in a hasty, yet faltering tone, "nor indeed, sir, would I willingly resume the ——." He broke off, but almost instantly subjoined in a quivering, and ghostly voice—"Have I not been—am I not dreaming still? Let me not babble in my feverish sleep—behold me! shall I not wake? Ah! if I'm indeed awake, there is a word—a thought—it cannot be, thou knowest it not—or ——." He stopped short; the other remained silent. Martinuzzi collecting his breath into one long, but most emphatic

whisper, added, "*if thou dost know it*, SAY." When this request ebbed from between his clenched teeth, and thin pale lips, Martinuzzi awaited the reply, in the tense and rigid attitude of one, about to hear judgment pronounced, for life or death, instinctively clinging to hope, while shrinking in despair. His head and shoulders were thrown forward, the lower part of his face seemed lost in his breast, his arms and elbows grew to his side, the hands were raised, though not joined, as if in deprecation; his mouth was compressed, as by a vice, his nostrils were distended, and his dark blue eyes were dry, and bursting from their sockets. In this attitude, he remained for some seconds, like a human form, exanimated in the instant of motion, presenting all the appearance of life, but none of its powers. His companion hesitated, ere he slowly pronounced, in a deep voice, the word "TRAITOR."

The appellation dissolved the charm, which held the regent motionless. Darting forward, he exclaimed, in a fierce tone, whilst his eye flashed, as if, like the lightning, it would have struck dead, whom it glanced upon—"Ah, slave!" Then suddenly stopping short, he added in a more resigned, though somewhat falsetto voice, "yet that is the pass-word, sure enough."

"There is a name can reach thee nearer," rejoined the stranger, with unabated boldness, and without noticing his discomposure, "Art thou not a——" he paused.

"I know what thou wouldst utter," broke in the regent. "When the envoy of Austria entered, thou hadst spoken it—it struck me then, like an icebolt—it was unlooked for. Now, now, I am better armed, sir. Give thy suspicion, or thy knowledge,—be it more loathsome, than thy own leprosy of mind,—give it the blackest name, thou knowest; I cannot choose but hear thee." There was another pause.

"Eighteen years gone by," recommenced the stranger—

"Thou wert an honourable man," again interrupted

Martinuzzi, " and wouldst have sunk into the cavernous earth, ere plucked damnation, from the jaws of hell, by such base, mean practices, as since ——-."

" And eighteen years past, what wert thou, my lord ?" demanded the stranger.

" Well, well," answered Martinuzzi, " we were friends —I know it—and are so still ; are we not ?"

" That have I yet to learn," answered the other.

There followed a dead silence, of several moments. At length the stranger, with deep organ-like articulation, resumed, " Thou shrewd impostor !" he began, when the regent interposed—

" Wait, I closed the outer chamber, did I not ? Go see, if it be secure."

The man passed into the presence-room. " You have made all fast within ?" asked Martinuzzi, in a voice of forced composure, as the stranger returned.

" If both our tongues were in the cannon's mouth," answered the other, " the voice would murmur, like an innocent sleep, beyond that barrier."

" Come further this way, though," said the regent, speaking in the low, timid, and convulsed tones of apprehension, whilst his limbs shuddered, as if with some strong internal anguish—"deeper, sir, *into the heart of rest*. Let us have no society, but our own terrors. Lightly ! so, lightly ! why," he added, more abruptly, " why look ! you have not closed the door ."

The stranger shut to the inner portal, and again approached where the regent stood, at the upper end of the apartment.

" So then," began Martinuzzi, " let us say no more— of this to-morrow. Death ! you know not how I loath this conversation. Well, what is to be ?"

" Thou dost mock the heart of this fond country, with a lying hope," began the stranger.

Martinuzzi advanced a few steps forward, clenching his hands—" Thou said'st as much erewhiles," he exclaimed :

" why repeat thy words? Speak to the point, prithee—this is no news."

" None to us—right," answered the other; " but what will the world say, think you, if men knew the love *she* bore thee,..*she*, the betrothed of Peter Count Pereny, who was the late king's sister—how cunningly!"

" Talk no more on't," interrupted Martinuzzi, with an unnatural and hushed stillness of articulation, " or do not talk so loud."

" There's no soul by, to hear us," remarked the stranger coolly.

" One doth hear!" exclaimed the cardinal, fixing his eye, now lit with a preternatural glare, on the countenance of the man—" One—I sir, look to it; now God forgive me! in truth, you know not what you prate about."

" You do forget yourself to say so," replied the stranger. " My lord, in the first place, give me back my brother, Albert of Eissenburg, by thy hands or by thy orders, done to a dishonest death, for that thou hadst good cause to fear, he would divulge certain bloody passages, betwixt thee and the Princess Beatrice."

" Speak lower, or (good God!) the venom of asps is on thy tongue," exclaimed Martinuzzi. His articulation was broken, and his hands were compressed together, with fearful energy. " I tell you, Eissenburg," he presently added, more calmly, " your brother was murdered, if murdered he be, as you say, neither with my knowledge, nor by my connivance. Let his blood lie where it may—my soul disclaims it."

" I believe you not, my lord," answered Eissenburg; " your agent was in company with the assassin, the same who ——, and that is what brings me hither. My house is desolate—my child came not forth to meet me, on my return from prison; I want her back again. Restore my heart to me, by giving Veronica to my arms—I'll have such exquisite vengeance, else—such as thou canst

well guess at. I have my brother's confession, and I have still remaining, of the packet, one document, which, by good fortune, had never been deposited in the window recess, and so was never stolen thence. That document — I know its contents — THE CONFESSION OF ALICIA!"

"Ay," said Martinuzzi, and his cheek assumed a hue, more cadaverous than before, "it is a tragic episode in a deplorable history; but I declare to you, Eissenburg," he added, in a firmer voice, and with earnest solemnity, "by Him, who sees our thoughts as plainly as our faces! my heart's as innocent as infant's sleep. As respects the lady Veronica's absence," proceeded Martinuzzi, after a pause, "it was from yourself, this afternoon, I first came to learn, either that, or your brother's murder."

"Where is my child, then?" cried Hubert, passionately; "but I see through your wiles. In default of King John's issue, she is the rightful heir of Hungary. You remembered her claims well, and pondered over them long; you imprisoned the father, the more readily at once to seize upon the daughter, and silence the brother. But, if you have smeared your soul in her true blood — if your safety be trenched, as you suppose, in her innocent life — I'll secure vengeance; tho', I ween, she be not the only princess of this ill-fated land, whom the ambition of a hypocritical priest has condemned to a sudden, and inexplicable fate. Have you sent my child to seek the shade of Beatrice? Have you again rifled the living tabernacle of the soul, and left me, in the stead of my Veronica, a low voiceless grave?"

"By all we mutually believe in, I protest to you — No!" replied Martinuzzi.

"But am I weak enough to credit you, with this damning document fresh in my remembrance, and after that lady's unnatural sacrifice, and my brother's cruel murder? He fell in his endeavour to preserve my child — then say, where hast thou bestowed her? Which of the

ministers of your despotism have you let loose on her—contamination, imprisonment, or massacre? Foul stain to the purple which thou sportest! Come, confess? We are alone—behold! I am not here unarmed."—Vicchy drew his ponderous two-handed spear, and half leaned on it, as on a staff.

The shades of evening were now fast deepening into the darkness of night, and the feeble twilight was just able to endow, with congenial life and motion, the incongruous and uncertain objects, which tapestried this apartment, without having sufficient power to dispel, or enable the startled sight to correct, the illusions, which it conjured. Forms of limbs, and human faces, came out, as it were, from the wainscot. On every side, in this atmosphere of superstition, some shadow seemed to hover, or gigantic figure projected itself; whilst the misty illumination, which was now admitted, through the medium we mentioned, broken by the luxuriant bryony, which ran mantling, amid the ribbed traceries of the arched casements, at once gifted lifeless matter with vitality, and gave a corporeal shape to the miscreations of the fancy. It almost seemed, as if the apartment grew populous with animated beings, and, as cloud after cloud drifted along the semicircle of the moon, now plunging surrounding objects into a shadowy mass, and anon permitting a melancholy, and uncertain gleam of light, to fall full through the shafted windows of the old building, shifting forms would extend their limbs, and dim fronts stretch forth their hands, and all would assume the various attitudes of prayer, or imprecation. There was one group, which, even more strikingly than the other figures, seemed to be actuated by this locomotive faculty. The subject was that of St. Paul, when, with lips touched by the seraph, with the living coal from God's altar, he indicated the Divinity, in the schools at Athens: it was done as large, or larger than life. The principal character was elevated in the foreground of the piece, within a foot

of the spot, where Hubert, with his right hand upon the hilt of his sword, was stationed. The apostle had been pourtrayed with one foot advanced, and his finger extended towards the inscription, Αγνώστω Θεῶ, while his floating toga was so contrived—or else the flickering gleams, that shot between the passing shadows produced the effect—that it waved along with the motion of his arm, and almost seemed to flutter in the intermitting light of the moon, or rustle in the night wind, whose every faint and passing murmur became plaintively audible, as it swept the mantling foliage round the mouldering citadel.

During Vicchy's last rapid speech, St. Paul had more than once let loose the ample gathering of his cloak, and the drapery seemed to be borne on the air, and, as it were, to spread itself towards the speaker. At the close, so wonderful was the conjuration of the artist, or else so powerful the illusion of the instant, the embodied figure of the saint appeared to descend, and to emerge into the void space, from out of the crowd of sophists and rhetoricians. Martinuzzi had planted himself betwixt the two casements, where darkness rendered it difficult to distinguish his person. "Eissenburg," he replied, at length, "you have heard me solemnly protest, I know nought of the lady Veronica—I repeat my asseveration. I trust she still exists, but—"

"She lives!" broke in a miraculous, and hollow whisper, close at the ear of Vicchy. Startled, he turned his head, in the direction of the voice, and his dilated glance lit on the wan countenance, the gleaming eye, that appeared to roll with a changeful and uncertain brightness, and the inspired lips of the apostle, dilated, as if pouring out the thunder of his eloquence, amidst an audience of Pagan philosophers. Vicchy gazed, and gazed, and he fancied he perceived the sainted being separate himself from the canvass. The longer his overstrained eye rested on the figure, the more firmly he became per-

suaded of the reality of the miracle. The mind of Hubert was so fettered in the anomalous trammels of his servile faith, and so deeply saturated with the superstitious dew of his corrupted worship, that miracles and visions (incident to the adoration or intercession of the saints,) sprung up in his belief, as in a hot-bed, and, like noxious weeds, choked with their rank luxuriance, the growth, at once, of sound reason, pure religion, and common sense.

Vicchy was too good a Catholic to be taken by surprise, and although he felt a little awed, yet a miracle surely was in the course of nature, or it would not be of such frequent occurrence. His imagination, naturally apt to distance itself from the material world, was prepared, by a long course of superstition, to admit, and to sustain, the visible action of the Deity; and wherefore, he internally argued, should he feel alarmed?

"Whom, Eissenburg, have we in the room?—whose was that voice?" inquired Martinuzzi, in a low tone. But Hubert heeded not the question. Each faculty of his soul was concentrated in one wild imagination; his legs shook, the spear dropped from his relaxed hold, and he sunk in genuflexion before the incarnate spirit of the saint, who had thus thrown off the shroud of his immortality, to hold with him personal communication. He prayed earnestly, and gazing on the apostle, in the full assurance of implicit faith, implored to be made acquainted with the fate of his child; and engaged, in a faltering voice, provided the saint vouchsafed a favourable response, he would have a rich altar dedicated to his particular honour, in the cathedral of St. Theresa, "that is," added the devout noble, as the recollection of his limited means struck him, "whenever my attainder shall be reversed." Hubert conceived, he heard with his ears the acceptance of his vow.

"Thy child liveth," answered St. Paul; or, if the words were not uttered by him, it was at least certain,

the solemn annunciation proceeded from the direction, where the apostle stood.

Again silence ensued, which Vicchy presently broke. "Is her liberty restricted?" he demanded, in a shuddering tone. There was no replication for nearly a minute. The form of the sacred visitant, without being so detailed as to intimate itself distinctly, nevertheless expanded, in the eyes of the rapt querist; and the thick clouds, that now crossed the moon's path, cast the Areopagus, and every other scriptural piece, which decorated the compartments of the chamber, into dim confusion.

"Her person," answered the angelic being, in a low, emphatic voice, "is in durance, and her mortal life, perhaps, at hazard."

"Ha!" exclaimed Hubert, "and from that traitor! Is it the divine will, I sacrifice him, where he stands?" No sooner had he uttered these words, than, in tones pitched higher, and sounding more awful, the answer hurtled on the air, as if the disembodied principle, syllabling it, hovered at his shoulder.

The organic breathing, which rang in the ears of Hubert, he remembered but too well. He recognised instantly the accents, and the express words of the awful prohibition to unclose the packet, which had electrified him, on that memorable night, when he was dragged from his lost Veronica, and consigned to prison; and, if the sounding forth were from heaven, so, also, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven;" for, at that instant, the pallid planet of night burst from behind the intervening rack, and slanted her soft, and ghostly radiance, into the chamber. Thus spoke the immortal voice: — "WOULD YOU DESTROY BODY AND SOUL? OFFICIOUS FOOL! — THE REGENT OF HUNGARY IS INNOCENT — SEEK TO KNOW NO MORE."

Vicchy was transfixed for several moments to the spot, where he knelt, confounded with horror, as, in the first few words of the sentence, his memory recalled the ener-

getic style of that script, whose language had been charactered in blood. At length, slowly raising himself to his feet, Vicchy looked towards where Martinuzzi remained, an apparently petrified auditor of the colloquy, between him and the apostle. Although the regent's figure was almost undistinguishable in the shade, it now appeared, on closer examination, that both his hands were clasped against his face. There was a long and dead silence, in that moonlit chamber. Vicchy was the first to renew the discourse. " My lord," he said, " you are acquitted;" — then, after pausing, in vain, for a reply, he continued, — " so far, at least, as respects my child; but ——" Here, he made another pause.

Alas! how strange and inconsistent are the workings of the human mind! How subtle and complicated is natural bias, in the analysis of human feelings! And what an enigma is contained in the entangled sources, and latent springs of human character and conduct,.. an enigma, which probably, not the profoundest researches of philosophy will ever enable us to solve.

Whilst Vicchy considered Martinuzzi, as the destroyer of his daughter, his language, as we have seen, was the effusion of virtuous indignation, and honest nature impressed her seal on the very intonation of his voice, impelling his courage, and dictating his sincerity. But the moment, his parental disquietude was set at rest, his habitual tergiversation returned in force. The natural sense, with which the father, for a brief interval, endowed the man, gave place to that distorted wisdom and crooked policy, which, with Vicchy, was its usual substitute. More shrewd than intelligent, more daring than determined, the unstable mind of the magnat was not nicely balanced, by substantial and comprehensive reason, and neither was the fluctuating scale, that regulated his conduct, inclined at any time, by the insensible operation of principle, or by the more stubborn intervention of conscience. The one was superseded by the

casuistry, induced by the habit of confession, and the obligation of penance, and the authority of the former had been early sacrificed to that convenient, but pernicious sophism, which taught indifferently, that any means, however vile, were sanctioned by the end, and that the end might be sanctified by the means. "But," proceeded Vicchy, "I have another account to settle with your highness." Again he paused.

Martinuzzi let fall his hands, and looked up. "Well," said the regent, in a voice of hollow strength.

"Is it your purpose," rejoined the noble, with dogged determination, "to seat the lawful heir of Hungary on the throne of these realms?"

"Whom, am I to understand, by that phrase?" asked Martinuzzi.

"My daughter, the Lady Veronica," was the reply.

"Indeed! how know you that?" rejoined the regent, in a voice which, although broken, may have had something of sarcasm, perceptible in the tones.

"Oh! I *know*," answered Vicchy, significantly.

"Thou dost indeed!" returned Martinuzzi, with the galling emphasis of stern reproof, and a flash of withering scorn shot from his lambent eyes; — "thou dost indeed, because thou art a thing, whose virtue is thine ignorance! Oh! thou art one, sir, whose highest excellence is that restless infirmity, which will peer into forbidden things, though the earth were rent to appal you, and fiends from the abysm cried,—Hold!"

"Be it so," answered Vicchy, proudly; "let the centre labour with earthquakes, and summon every confederate in the infernal pit to aid you! it shall not shake me: I am thrice armed. But, good my lord cardinal," he continued, in a lighter strain, "'tis well for you, your principles do not make it needful, you should square your conduct to your vocation. For myself, understand, your eminence, my lamp, so bright of yore, was wasting; it did grow dim, and almost failed me; — it

quaked, sir, at every breeze. I looked about, ('tis natural, nay, your highness, one day, you felt the same,) for a clear flame, to light me through the world — I found it; — it shall serve my turn, though I asked no leave. My paths are plainer than the sun's, — I have committed myself too providentially in this, to fear the consequence. My ignorant sin turns out a substantial, though tardy justice; and, when reproach is flung on me, from lips like yours, excuse me, if I say, I cannot feel it."

"Go on," said Martinuzzi, in a voice of studied composure.

"There was a packet, — (no matter how it came into my hands), — there WAS, I say, for where it is now I cannot tell," said Vicchy; — "that packet I opened."

"You did sir, you basely did!" exclaimed Martinuzzi.

"I opened it," continued Vicchy, without regarding the prelate's interruption, "and, by favour of the Virgin, one document yet exists. When I heard its contents, I learned to look upon my fault with mercy. I trusted, on hearing it bore reference to your highness, to scan the patriot and the statesman; — but, ha! my lord, I lit upon the traitor!"

A suffocating sensation stifled the sigh, Martinuzzi would gladly have heaved. He faintly smiled, and said, "Dost dare, for thy miserable life? —but take heed, take heed, I say!"

"Thou mayst be mighty in thy fame, my lord, and powerful, but truth is ever armed," returned Vicchy: "yet were I loath to hurl thee from thy greatness — abdicate thine usurped estate — transfer the sceptre of Czerina into the hands of Veronica. Adjust our differences in this way, and the story of your offences, and the wrongs of the house of Zapola, shall never rise to mar that splendid page in our country's annals, which records the deeds of Martinuzzi."

" And really, Eissenburg, cannot you tax our bounties more highly?" said the regent, in the calm accents of haughty irony; " why, sir, what you require of me is a mere bagatelle. Delegate to you our supreme authority,—we are grown incompetent—'tis too weighty for us. Wrest from our hands the barren sceptre of the reigning queen, and turn over the bauble to your daughter, who will graciously present her highness with a distaff in exchange! You ask too little, sir; you request, I would substitute my bonnet for the diadem? Alas! God knows," said Martinuzzi, interrupting himself with deep feeling, " my aching temples would be all the lighter for it; but, in faith," he subjoined, after a short pause, and with something like a smile on his pale features, " it was written in heaven, that I was to be King of Hungary! You meant to dethrone the Lady Czerina — but I have the start of you, my lord. What you dared conceive, I have already compassed."

Vicchy preserved silence, but his uneasy gestures, the knitting of his brow, the gnawing of his nether lip, and, more particularly, the malign twinkle of his snake-like eyes evinced plainly, that his thoughts were perplexed, and that he was meditating some further tortuous proposal.

The regent presently resumed the discourse, in a calm and measured voice. " We will have this outlawry of yours reversed, my good lord," he said; " and, in other respects, strive to redress the injuries of fortune; but, hereafter, when we see you, with your fair daughter, at court, which will be a heartfelt satisfaction to us, I must interdict the subject of this hour's converse."

After hesitating for an instant, Vicchy replied,—" You will let the reversionary right of the Lady Veronica be publicly recognised."

" That may not consist with our conscience, my lord," observed Martinuzzi, — " no kingdom can your child ever inherit."

" Wherefore, your highness?" demanded Vicchy, in short and impatient tones.

" For one, under the ban of the church, to reign over a catholic people, is unlawful; — the lady is heretic."

" Nay," exclaimed Vicchy, passionately, " this paltering is no less hypocritical, than gross; but it is futile. How you learned, that my Veronica is unhappily —" he paused, ere he subjoined, in a subdued voice — " a heretic, I cannot divine; but, since none, besides your eminence, knows of her heresy, it were no impossible task, methinks, to hide it from the world."

" My conscience, my lord," answered Martinuzzi, " will not permit of this interested composition. The trail of the serpent has already slimed over the fair land of the Magyar. It is my duty to stop the disease, instead of conniving at its diffusion."

" I see through your highness's purpose," exclaimed Hubert, " and know well, whom you would desire to reign, after you, in Erdély; but, rather than permit it, I'll issue forth into the public streets, and blow about your guilt." He paused, and then added, significantly, " I have that letter still!"

" Ha! I remember," said Martinuzzi, " so, where is it? — give it me,..to read."

Vicchy was silent.

" Nay," added the regent, " I'll return it to you, however shameful the means, by which you first became possessed of it. I would merely cast mine eyes over it."

" I would not care, to trust the document in your highness's hands, were it still in mine own," replied Vicchy; " but, in honest truth, I have transferred it into other custody."

Lividly glared Martinuzzi's eye, in the semi-obscurity of the apartment. " Hell! and eternal shame!" he burst out, breathing short, and stamping on the ground. " Vicchy! — vacillating driveller! What have you done with Alicia's confession? — speak, slave!"

Before so unlooked-for a boiling of indignation, the weaker nature of Eissenburg succumbed and trembled. He spoke not. It may be observed, that the phrenzy of minds, of powerful and commanding calibre, will commonly abash, in its paroxysm, the more feeble passions of less exalted characters, as the foaming cataract, thundering down the kromacks, soon engulphs and overpowers, in its descent, the minor torrent, which may, at first, have raged by its side. Vicchy, on witnessing the ungovernable fury of Martinuzzi, deemed it most prudent to preserve silence.

"Why don't you answer, sir?" exclaimed the regent, his eyes glancing with impatience: "unto whom have you given my letter?—earthquakes quiver in my flesh—speak, as you hope for mercy."

"My lord, if I must needs own the fact," replied Vicchy, with some hesitation, and recoiling a step before the forward movement of the prelate; "I entrusted it, but only for awhile, to Luke Swartz."

"To him, hey?" returned Martinuzzi, his haggard brow relaxing from its previous workings. "When, prithee?—and what opportunity had you?"

Vicchy explained the circumstance of his encountering Swartz on the ramparts.

"Ah, I deserve it all," remarked the regent, more composedly, though still with bitterness, and he turned away.

From the comparatively calm tone, in which these words were enunciated, Vicchy perceived, that the impending storm had blown over, and at once he fell back into his habitual character. "My lord," he said, after long mutual silence, "I will allow you a month to consider of my proposal, that, upon your demise, the sole right to the throne of this kingdom, vest in my daughter, if, then, your highness decline closing with my terms, you may assay, to your immortal infamy, how much

longer this wretched land will bear with the sway of an homicide."

Like one, on the verge of a precipice, awakened to a sense of his danger, was the start of Martinuzzi.— "Madman!" he cried, "in thy tongue millions of adders hiss! Will you not hold your peace?" He strode, or rather violently tottered, across the chamber, and stood, as if struck speechless, shivering in every vein; his nether jaw, indeed, moved convulsively, but his lips were dry as ashes, and no articulate sound breathed from them. At length, conquering his emotions, he thus, with startling rapidity of utterance, delivered himself,—"We were talking, sir, upon what topic?—Quick, where was our converse?—Now, I am gone, sir!—what was it?"

"Yet awhile," began Vicchy, but Martinuzzi proceeded, in a quick suffocated tone.

"My lord, well—I know—somewhat you said—'tis past. What was't, I ask again—assist me."

"You will please, at your peril, to acknowledge and proclaim the Lady Veronica heir of the monarchy," replied Vicchy, perhaps, with the more determination, that he considered the starts and discomposure of the regent, as symptoms of his expiring resolution, and fancied, he discovered a yielding and faltering of purpose, in the confusion of mind, and disordered senses, which the manner and language of Martinuzzi manifested.

The indignant prelate gasped for breath. "That word, Eissenburg, has made an end," presently broke from his convulsed lip; then, suppressing his emotions with difficulty, with desperate rapidity he went on. "The sun is down, sir, I must be stirring—'tis the hour of prayer—behold me!" and he stood up erect, in form and posture proudly eminent. "Behold me, how I stand, unmoved, and yet it must have been!" He paused, but shortly, again proceeded, abruptly: "we purpose, tomorrow, my lord duke, exchanging our mitre for a helm,

and hope to inflict a sort of unpleasant surprise, upon our enemies, in which your co-operation (judging of your abilities from our last argument) must be invaluable. You shall bear command, fitting your rank, and possibly, you will find me better tempered by to-morrow, when we will adjust our differences — if any be. This way, my lord duke." The regent passed through the door of communication, into the presence-chamber, followed by Vicchy. The moon diffused her mellow light over the whole of this apartment, and Vicchy might distinctly discover the ghastly visage of the cardinal;— his wild straining eyes gleamed, with a horrible and vacant stare, and every muscle of his face seemed contorted, with agony. He approached close to Vicchy, and, fronting him, where he stood, glared fixedly on his countenance for above a minute, all the while apparently striving to speak, but no articulation answered his will. At length, the burning tide of passion receding in his throat, he found utterance. "Great God, forgive me!" he ejaculated, and then he again stopped, and gasped a long trembling breath, ere he continued, with intense and withering solemnity. "Man!" he said, "hadst thou come sightless into thy wretched existence, as blind, God in Heaven knows, thou art in spirit!—or else, wert dumb, as in thy soul thou indeed seem'st, to all good purposes; this conference had never been — then these passages, that have just transpired had never chanced — and, then, my lord—but———" Martinuzzi's voice faltered; he paused for a second. The deadly and appalling calm, which sat upon his countenance, but the moment before, was succeeded by that tempest of the features, in which every nerve seemed at work—he set his teeth hard, and both hands gradually tightened on the steel armlet of Vicchy, grasping him firmly, like a manacle, or, we would say, with the Herculean force of partial insanity. "Devil!" he shouted, suddenly altering his tone, in his uncontrollable agitation, "thou hast made me scorch

to the full height of a blazing calenture, spectres and bloody deeds, like tresses of dancing fire, float round me and about me, and I, myself, am all made up of fire.— Ha! that gash!—thou well mayst shudder, when bloody forms are round. I cannot bear it — avoid my sight! — nay, then, for your own sake, — without reply. The thought, I'm apt to practise, I may else have to repent me.—'Tis wild fire here, that only blood can quench — go — I'd pray — Ave Maria! So, I am calmer now — your pardon, sir, we'll speak of this to-morrow, as I said — hence — begone slave! from my sight! — and, suddenly, and wisely, hear you? (and Martinuzzi stamped violently) 'tis for your life, do you understand — farewell!" On saying these last words, in a low intense voice, Martinuzzi suddenly relinquished his iron hold of Vicchy, and hurriedly staggered to unclose the door. For awhile his nervous agitation impeded his object; but, having succeeded, with his hand he haughtily waved Vicchy from his presence, who departed in silence, not a little relieved at the termination of a conference, so fraught with offence and danger.

MANUSCRIPT XX.

" Now I believe the Troglodites of old,
Whereof Herodotus and Strabo told,
Since every where about these parts, in holes,
Cunicular men I find, and human moles."
BROWN'S *Travels in Dacia, &c.* 1688.

" Her kirtle brimstone red
With clothes upon her heade,
That thy was a sowe of leade,
Wrythen in a wonder wise,
After the Sarazins gise;
With a whim wham
Upon her brayyne panne,
Like an Egyptian
Capped about,
When she goeth out."
SKELTON.

THE scene shifts to the woody banat, between Alba Julia, and Coloswar, and the time advances to a few days from the events, which we have related in our last chapter. The sun had clomb high in the heaven, when the figure of a solitary horseman was seen wending his way, over the low and thickly wooded flats, through which the auriferous river Marosh, near its confluence with the Theisse, winds its earliest course. The narrow, and nearly undefined by-path the traveller had chosen, skirted the very edge of the stream, the direction of which, however inconstant, seemed to regulate his route. Occasionally, indeed, he would cut across the sort of Isthmuses, caused

by the wooded Peninsulas, which frequently indented the waters, but never so far lost sight of the narrow line of track, he followed, as to diverge into the public road, as in courtesy we are bound to style a broken earthy thoroughfare, which, at greater or less distance from the shore, preserved a parallelism with the course of the aforesaid river. Now, as the art of road-levelling was little understood in Transylvania at the time we treat of, the route in question, appeared almost as faithful to the lineaments of grace, as its more natural and noisier elder. But, malgre the monstrous " cantles it cut out," and the other indifferent attempts at a " fine shape," it must be confessed, after all, that it " imitated nature most abominably." Whether our traveller entertained any fancy of this sort, we will not pretend to say. We infer, however, he held in small admiration, the meanders of the MacAdams of the day, for whenever the public path made any sudden advances, towards where the marosh laved, with alternating dash, the frail flowers and tall spear grass, that enamelled its banks, he invariably clapped spurs to his steed, and held on at a brisker pace, till the current and the high road, had either parted company of their own accord, or been again divorced, by the swelling vineyards, or by thick and overhanging groves of the alder and willows, or by broad and interposing meadow ground, enclosed with hedges of thorn, now checkered by the rich and golden tinge of autumn. The martial garniture of the equestrian was complete, but his bearing hardly corresponded with his equipment. Indeed, his dwarfish insignificant figure, showed conspicuously to disadvantage, in contrast to the barbed destrier, he bestrode. It even seemed, as if the animal himself entertained a sort of contemptuous opinion of his rider, since he champed and curvetted, as though, " smelling the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting," he longed for his pride to be reined in, by an abler arm. The traveller's beautiful muster-piece, or

pelisse of sheep-skin, concealed most of his other attire, and fell in ample folds over his shoulders, mingling with the embroidered housing, that enveloped his horse's flanks. Of his visage, little could be seen; but his sunken features, and deep twinkling eyes showed horribly, under the hollow helmet. Our equestrian, having journeyed since sun-rise, through a dreary waste of *pusztas* or cattle farms;* the lagging pace of his steed, and other indications of a carnal nature, more proper to himself, rendered very welcome the appearance of a straggling village, situated less than a league in advance of where he rode. It was composed of low clay huts, starting so few feet above the surface of the ground, that nothing but the issuing steam and the little clouds of light smoke, ascending in graceful spires from their several fissures in the earth, could have distinguished the settlement, at any distance, from the soil upon which it stood.

The Troglodyte* hamlets, which now opened on the view, have been long effaced, but for the last century, a Saxon town, bearing the name of Mirizlo, and nearly covering their site, forms the prominent feature in the surrounding landscape. These habitations, excavated in the declivity of a gentle eminence, extending to the very edge of the rivulet, were intermixed with, and surrounded by mulberry and maple trees, whilst the sere branches of the acacia waved tremulous and pale, over the mossy roofs. On every side, for several leagues,

* Literally, uninhabited countries.

† The Troglodyte hamlet. — Herodotus and Pliny with their habitual tendency to the marvellous, describe the subterranean nations of Ethiopia ("qui specus excavant") that went by this name.

Montesquieu. on the same subject, is very entertaining.—See Lettres Persannes, Lett. xi. et suiv.

The settlements of the Cygani race in Hungary and Transylvania, were almost all subterranean. See Brown's Travels in Dacia, Styria, &c. London, 4to. 1688.

there was no object to break the waving ocean of forest leaves—

"The sea of foliage tossing with the gale,"*

of which the little village we are describing, may be regarded as the centre, excepting where, here and there, the trellised lines of the Syrian† vineyards nodded their "grape crowned heads"‡ into the silvery Marosh, "purple and gushing,"‖ or where imbowering trees receded their mellow hues of fire and gold, and charily admitted the influence of the air and sun, the eye might take in long vistas of forest land, and occasional snatches of cultivated glebe might be discerned; which, however scanty, was sufficient for the exercise of the limited agriculture of the natives,—while, more frequently, dots of green savannah intervened, commonly supplying a most abundant crop for the droves of milch buffaloes, and herds of Turkish swine, that were there grazing. With these exceptions, the noon-day sun now shone on one vast, and varied combination of woodland scenery. Here, the phalanx of primeval oak expanded its immense, and gnarled arms. There, long regiments of walnut stretched athwart either side the road, their stern and venerable boughs, yielding, as it were, in wanton sport, at every breath of the mendicant winds, their rattling alms; while on all sides, the alder, birch, and poplar, and the light beech, whose giant height seemed to scale the heavens, accumulate the glories of their autumnal dies. Far below the bramble, the juniper and the dog-rose, sometimes starred with ten thousand blossoms, twine around the gray trunks, or cunningly enlace their tendrils, with the off-

* Wordsworth.

† These vines were originally transplanted from Syria, by the emperor Probus.

‡ Ford.

‖ Don Juan.

sets, and younglings of the forest. But it is now some weeks since wild and untrodden flowers of any description, wasted their luxuriance on the dim forest air. No more the pale wood-sorrel fluctuates in the draught of the light summer wind,—the bright hues of the anemone pulsitilla have long passed away; the delicate violet hath ceased to load the breeze with perfume, and the blossom of the white asphodel, and the lilac garniture of the clustering cyclamen, fail to variegate the opening glades, and snatches of smooth lawn, that momentarily basking in the yellow sunshine, diversify the vast expanse of forest scenery.

Through these immemorial depths of woodland, intersected by paths worn by the *Kanactz** and his droves, the bright Morash flowed, tracing the windings of the labyrinthian dell, and channelling its path through many a green ravine. The river was irregular in its width; sometimes spreading over acres of the sylvan plain, but more generally sweeping on with a soft and gurgling sound, beneath the embowering groves, yet even so, occasionally catching the warm crimson of heaven. Now, lightly curled, by Zephyrus, into tiny wavelets, it would bubble over the moss, or dance, in sparkling joyousness, on the polished stones, and anon, creeping in deep tranquillity, where once its waters raved along, like a mountain torrent, it reflected, in its translucent bosom, the knolls and crags, by which it was closely margined, or the woven grove, that at once shadowed its narrow current with a deeper hue, and canopied its quietness. These unexplored wilds echoed no more to the carols of the feathered tribes, that, some months before, sported amid their foliage, nor were their solitude and silence interrupted, or their coverts penetrated, save at rare intervals, by the music of the huntsman's bugle.

Owing, however, to the disordered state of the period,

* Cattle-keeper.

the savage beasts of the forest multiplied, in the free and almost undisturbed possession of their sylvan domain, which was evidenced, by their being occasionally seen prowling, beyond the verge of their solitary fastnesses. The irascible boars, peculiar to the country, made frequent irruptions into the more populous districts, and the gaunt wolf and ferocious bear were not seldom a terror to the adventurous shepherd, when, inadvertently, in search of some straggler of his gigantic-horned flock, he stumbled on those dark coverts, or tangled thickets, where they made their lair.

As the course of the stream, along whose shagged banks our traveller pursued his journey, winded nearer the small clustered tenements, he had descried in the distance, the broken Volgy expanded, and the river emerged upon a waster and wilder district, through which, (its waters having been augmented by those of the *Arangos** from the Kalota mountains,) it rolled with a larger volume. He was not long in reaching the vicinity of the little hamlet, which, shrouded in a mantle of acacia, his experienced eye had recognised, from the first, for a settlement of the Cyganis. The hoarse and sullen roar of the brook loaded the atmosphere of noon, and, gradually swelling on the traveller's ears, for the last quarter of a mile, led him, in part, to anticipate the characteristic scene, which a sharp turn of the road, in conformity with the indentation of the river, suddenly presented to his view. He found himself separated, by a narrow slip of smooth sand, from a beautiful and artificial cascade. Here the hand of art was assisted, in some measure, by the natural obstacle of a range of basaltic rock, over which dam-head the sylvan stream now made a decided and rapid shoot, into the white and billowy pool beneath.

* La Moroch recoit les eaux d'Aragnos ou rivière d'Oree, ainsi nommé parceque cette rivière charrie des grains d'or, que des compagnies de vagabonds ramassent, et apportent à la chambre des finances.—Mem. du Prince Rakoczy.

The fall was not great, but, so far as it went, it formed a charming foreground to the picture, our traveller paused to contemplate, — and there were not awanting accessaries, of a peculiar kind, to interest the beholder. Over above, where the river dashed from its higher level against the dyke, a multitude of strange, dark, squalid, human beings, were observed busily engaged, sifting the bed for that ore, to compose which, at the period we treat of, the alchymist, in his visioned cave, raked the cinders of his crucible in vain. The sex, styled soft, *par excellence*, with their infants hanging from their shoulders, and whose showy tatters scarcely sufficed for decency, were dabbling up to their very knees, in the turbid and flashing waters of the temporary dam, in whose dark, and beating waves, their hearts found a treacherous likeness. Men, as imperfectly clothed, placed on projecting ledges of rock, were washing, in their troughs, the particles of glittering sand, which adhered to the Χρυσομαλλος,* the golden fleece of undressed sheepskins; while scores of dark-eyed urchins, of both sexes, and all ages, between inarticulate childhood and vigorous youth, were disporting, mostly in a state of nudity, at the bottom of the fall. These rose and sank in the tortured billows, which chafed over the reef below, like glancing spectres, save where, here and there, the elder were contributing their small aid or impediment, as the case might be.

The principal figure among the picturesque group, hidden from view, by some intervening branches, till the horseman came within a stone's throw of where she stood, seemed placed there by the directing wish of Salvator Rosa. The moment his eye lit on that form, the rider reined in his steed instinctively, and, with such a sudden recoil, as almost to throw him on his haunches. Then he felt involuntarily for his arms, and would have

* See Strabo, lib. xiii. circa medium.

again spurred the jaded destrier forwards. Mastering these impulses, however, he remained where he had drawn in rein, silent, and, to all appearance, unmoved, but internally agitated, while he awaited, with awful misdoubtings, the first word of the hated apparition.

The ancient beldame, in question, was clad with more consideration than the other Cyganis, and her gay attire was worn with an air of superiority, though fashioned in that grotesque taste, ordinary to the vagrant tribe. She presented a fantastic appearance, that might have reminded the reader of Skelton's description of Elynoure Rumminge. She was stationed on a ledge of flat rock, at the height of a few yards from the ground, and within as many feet of the water's edge. To her right was a clump of alders, and her emaciated hand rested on the ragged trunk of an ancient pine, that, rock-rooted, stretched, like a slippery bridge, right athwart the breakwater, while parasite creepers, drenched in sparry foam, either matted, in vigorous maturity, round the fissured base, or (as if to listen to the music of the fall, and swinging in mid-air over their no longer limpid mirror,) clung to the whole length of the projecting pine, by aërial tendrils. She reared her towering form, on an ivied stone, while her scarlet *Kerialo*,* soiled by time, and dank with the foamy spray, flapped to and fro, obedient to the sweeping breeze. This woman, bending down her haggard face and elfin locks, hailed our traveller almost at the instant he pulled up, with a voice, whose wild accent rivalled the rush of the broken current.

"So ho! well met!" she exclaimed, "I have tarried long and patiently, but not in vain, I see. I knew you would take this road." As she spoke, she kept her eyes fixed on the horseman's face, over which a cloud passed, significant of inward vexation; but whatever was the

* Cygani's mantle.

source of his trouble, it did not prevent his replying, in a firm voice —

"Would you aught with me, good Unna, that you seem to lie in wait for my coming? I dreamt not of the pleasure of seeing you to-day."

The gipsy cut short these expressions of courtesy, by throwing back her mantle, and stretching forth her long bare arms to the skies. "Doubtless, doubtless," she rejoined, in a stern voice; — "the stars above vouchsafe no warning, but bide their own fiat, in this and all things else. Did I not tell you, from the beginning, that, ere the prey of the mighty one was retaken, and the spoil seized by the terrible, should be rescued, I would confer with you; and that, whether I accosted you on *Puszta's* solitudes, or drew your midnight curtain in the strongest var in Hungary, depended upon my pleasure, not thine. But now, your good steed is jaded, and you yourself must be worn with travel; you require rest and aliment ere you proceed. Should you still," she added, with a peculiar expression, "after what I have to communicate, persist in venturing to the city of the Zibin.* Dismount, then, and resign the care of your horse to those *Chevos*,† one of whom will guide you, in safety, whither I, who will not be far behind, shall direct him."

Thus speaking, Unna turned away; and, having beckoned two of the dripping youngsters, who, with gaping mouths and staring eyes, had left their gambols, to ascertain what was going on, addressed a few words to them in the Cygani patois. Obediently, one laid hold of the horse's bridle, while the other, tripping lightly away, made signs to our traveller to follow him. For a moment, the latter remained irresolute. He indented his teeth in his nether lip, in evident vexation, and then, whether it was that he descried something, in the gipsy's proceedings, that argued a suspension of his own freedom

* City of the Zibin; Hermanstadt. † Boys.

of volition, he alighted; and, silently, took the path, the tawny gipsy youth had, previously, indicated, and which, a few rods in advance, deflected a little from the public causeway.

The dwellings of this tribe of the Cyganis, were on an elevation, whose abruptness added to its height. A slight waterfall was observed, trickling slowly down the channels of the rock, maintaining the health and verdure of those trees, of spontaneous growth, whose picturesque disposition, beautified the mountain. Amongst these, the graceful acacia, as usual, was most generally cultivated. By means of notches, and slight projections in the rock, and sometimes, by zigzag and irregular stairs, conducting from hovel to hovel, our traveller clambered up the graduating roofs, till he ascended to the level of a detached habitation, of a somewhat superior appearance, to those by which it was surrounded. The acacia shot up, behind this dwelling, which it over-canopied with branches, that, spreading far and wide, shook their sere leaves upon the thatched piatza; beneath, and about which, tame storks were seen, expatiating, with their long bills, amid the accumulated filth and abominations, of more than one twelvemonth. Chained to the little, low-arched door, the large-limbed, Hungarian wolf-dog, the ordinary guardian of the abodes of the Cyganis, "bayed deep-mouthed welcome."

Into the interior of the semi-circular premises, our traveller was ushered, by his agile Mercury, who, immediately, like a shot, took to his heels, leaving his charge almost lost, in their dark, close, smothering atmosphere. The walls, composed of loose stones and turf, had, not long before, been whitewashed; yet they already bore evidence, that the legal vent, in the centre of the roof, answered its destined object very unsatisfactorily, although the circular aperture had been pierced, directly over the fire-place, which, constructed of clay, was placed, according to custom, in the middle of the apart-

ment. Furniture, there was literally none. A fragment of rock, which, it was clear, from the narrowness of the door-way, and of the single loop-hole that admitted air and light, must have been entombed at the first erection of the hovel, served the purpose of a table. Near the dying embers of the fire, was an earthen pot; and, in a further corner, a miscellaneous heap of utensils lay confusedly together, on the cold, earthen floor. These consisted of an iron pan, some spoons, a water jug, an odd knife, a bellows, a stone anvil, and sundry carpenter's tools. A large square of red cloth, tapestried one entire side of the apartment.

The individual, who now found himself in the temporary tenancy of this hovel, having cast a cursory glance around, at the vessels and implements we have inventoried above, seated himself on a broken chest, and seemed patiently to await the coming of the gipsy. Meantime, his thoughts were not idle, but, travelling far, comprehended, in their wide range,— the past, as in a clear and single point, and the future,..the vague and undefined future, with its ever-shifting horizon of airy schemes, and bright uncertainties. As we happen to possess the means of developing these phantasmas of the brain, the curious reader would take it amiss, were we to let the interval of breathing-time elapse, without his having had some inkling afforded him, of what was passing in the mind of the solitary stranger. His meditations ran nearly in the following order :—

"It were enough to persuade one, that this Boszorkany has the cunning these hucksters of fortune arrogate, and for which she, in particular, bears such repute. For eighteen long years, whenever we have met by chance, not a hint has she let drop, of her agency in that transaction. I might have fancied, at times, only that I knew the memory of the deed was ineffaceable, that she had forgotten it all, so deep a silence has she maintained. And yet, at last, when the hour has come for throwing

off the mask, the cursed witch starts up suddenly, before my eyes, reminding me of the very words, she so solemnly uttered, when she consigned the new-born infant to my custody. How comes she now to forecast my purpose? 'Tis a perilous obstacle this, to our movements, but one on whose occurrence, blinded by her cunning, I had not sufficiently laid my account. Her evidence would, no doubt, complete the link in the irrefragable chain, but it were vain to hope for it. From whatever inscrutable cause, he must be sure of her, or he had hardly dared to set a price on the head of the brigand, her son. He thought himself, also, sure of me;—of me, whose life he saved, indeed, to make it one long agony;—of me, whose sister — poor Alicia, beloved saint! thy broken heart is about to be avenged. We were the only mortal witnesses, he deemed, he had cause to apprehend. He dreamt not of Peter Pereny;—where, where, now hides the graf? His single presence — his testimony, were of more avail, than that signature of his, which the coronet of St. Stephen will conceal through unnumbered years; unless the revealing death-bed inscription of John of Zapola, be swiftly brought to light,—and that crown— the Cygani has it — so I heard from Sigismund. But she — the vagrant's here!"

Such was the course of tumultuous thoughts, chafing in the stranger's mind, for the few minutes preceding the coming of Unna, whose form now appeared in the doorway; and her harsh voice was heard, before her figure was obvious to his eye.

"Hark!" she exclaimed, "hark, to that flourish! those martial strains might rouse a warrior; — but thou!——"

The traveller listened, and his ears caught, faintly, the music of the Hungarian march, mingling, by fits, with the sullen roar of the waterfall beneath, whose deep voice murmured through the apartment. With a marked change of countenance, he started to his feet!

"Dost hear!" proceeded the gipsy, with a ghastly laugh: "The capitany* comes, whose banner has never yet quailed to an enemy."

"Whom mean you?" demanded the other, snatching hold of the helmet he had laid aside; while such was his paroxysm of consternation, that the instant paleness of his visage rivalled the white feather, which surmounted the glittering head-piece—at the same time, he made as rapid a movement, as his trembling joints permitted, towards the entrance of the hut.

"Our regent," returned the gipsy, as she slammed to the postern, with violence, and assuming an erect and determined posture, placed her back against it. "Martinuzzi has taken the field, sir, and I now plainly tell you, Luke Swartz, you quit not this spot till you learn my will, and are prepared to obey it."

The individual, whose personal freedom was so unexpectedly placed "under circumscription and restraint," and whom the reader's sagacity will most probably have already recognised, for their sometime acquaintance, looked aghast.

"The regent approaches, at the head of the Hungarian army," continued Unna, "and within this hour, I expect the honour of his company, even where you now stand trembling."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Swartz, with a discomposed aspect and faltering voice, "not for worlds would I meet him. Good Unna, it is not long since I proved the means of safety to Count Ragotzy, your son: we are in league, as you know. I have hazarded my life with Martinuzzi, by transporting Sigismund beyond his jurisdiction, but I intrusted the youth with your son, as a pledge of my fidelity."

Here Unna, casting on him a scornful glance, interposed. "And having made himself wings, he and your faith have taken flight together," said the gipsy.

* Chieftain.

" For the freak of a madman, you hardly will consider me accountable," returned Swartz, with some slight appearance of embarrassment.

" A madman," repeated Unna, with scornful emphasis— " His haviour was sane enough the other night, in the vaults of Hermanstadt. 'Twas I, who proved the madder I fear,..who was most mad to show him the image of his father, in the ebullition of my wrath against the regent, for purposing to infringe the safe-conduct of my son. From that hour, I have seen through your course of fraud, but, mad or not mad, holding him in my hands, I was in no hurry to do, what were better done quickly, and what, but for thy treachery in heeding the puling humanity of Martinuzzi, had been over eighteen years ago,—now, however, that he has absconded, you are amenable, and but one amend is in your power. Luke Swartz, the body of Sigismund, dead or alive, must be rendered to me."

" Only let me depart for the present," replied Swartz, evasively, " and we will speak of it elsewhere, and when you will."

Unna knit her brow. " Now, or in this world never," she cried, " must this difference be determined! Attempt not flight, for, know, I have planted armed men without, to cut you down, should you venture." Then advancing forward into the chamber, she added, " You will hardly escape, but I leave you free to try the experiment. By remaining, you need not fear encountering Martinuzzi; he will not be here yet awhile, and I shall have timely notice of his approach. Rest thee then in peace, and partake of such behoveful refreshment, as methinks will be no bad induction to that mutual understanding, which presently, without more ado, we must re-establish."

Swartz was not lacking in " the better part of valour." He acknowledged to himself, the policy of following the above recommendation, and immediately resumed his seat on the chest, while Unna proceeded to discharge her

culinary functions,—the earthen pipkin was placed in the midst of the wood embers, which at length leaped into a flame,—the smoke whereof, eddied about in many a graceful wreathe. First, there was set before our traveller a basin of boiled prunes; then pieces of salmon and char were broiled on the glowing charcoal, and, after being thrown into a scarlet fever, by a plentiful sprinkling of the *paprika*, or cayenne of Hungary, were served up.

The fish, Unna assured him, as he silently applied himself to its destruction, had been caught in the neighbouring stream, which, although perhaps not quite so populous as the celebrated Theisse,* abounded, like most of the Hungarian rivers, in the finny race.

During the short and frugal repast, the remarks and responses on either side were few and brief. Swartz watched the motions of his hostess with a critical eye, and his apprehension, sharpened by imminent peril, discovered a stern, unbending resolution in her demeanour, which, to say sooth, generated certain misgivings in his mind, which made it hard for him to recover his customary artifice, and self-command,—but not before he was reasonably well refreshed, and his meal washed down by a few cruises of tolerable mead, did the Cygani interrupt his cogitation, in good earnest, by abruptly demanding—

"Whither the wild fugitive had betaken himself, after having effected his escape from the subterranean fortress, where Ragotzy left him?"

"He remains in the neighbourhood of Coloswar, at present," answered Swartz.

"Ha!" cried Unna, "Now, mind ye me both, and thou Swartz, take heed of following a shade. Coloswar hath lost the apple of her eye,—her glory hath departed out of her,—she plumeth herself on her stout defence,

* The Theisse; said to be more prolific in fish, than any other river in Europe, in so much, that according to a popular hyperbole, the river is two parts water, and one fish.

and laugheth to scorn, the attacks of Baptista Castaldo; but her mirth is, like the ground we tread upon, hollow, Luke Swartz. Yet, it is even for that ye affect her, and you deem not that the casket hath been rifled, and despoiled of its treasure. I know you, man, and what's more, I penetrated through your shallow compliance, from the first. I would now pluck out these two eyes, could they have deceived me, what time I gave the babe into your arms. Double-dyed villain! I saw thy drift, and perceived you were false; but I pretended to be thy dupe; for even then, I pierced the dim horizon, that curtained the expanse of time, and the reflection of the present hour of vengeance was shadowed on my mental vision; but had I all along been blind as credulity, it were *now* to be undeceived. Coloswar!—why, thou fool!—I can look through and through thee. What but the shadowy lure of a crown makes the idiot haunt Coloswar? Luke Swartz, when in the vaults of Hermanstadt, in the rage of inspiration and revenge, I vaguely gave the boy to know his parentage; he remarked significantly, 'Fools are no rubs in the way of usurpers.' Thou hast done more, sir; thou hast told him all, and now would take advantage of the lord regent's absence, to pave the way in Hermanstadt, for his reception. You have shuffled and dealt cunningly; yet, though a skilful gamester, have failed in a single card. Your chances were nicely calculated, sir,—only one antagonist you disregarded,—the gipsy, Unna. One little impediment you overlooked,—the force of nature!"

Swartz, who, throughout the above address, had sunk his head upon his breast, in a dejected posture, now looked up. "I do not understand you, sage and gentle Unna," he said, in a tone, where his chagrin and uneasiness vainly endeavoured to disguise themselves, under an affectation of indifference,—"the force of nature! What natural claim can Martinuzzi prefer to your allegiance or fidelity?"

"And if he have none, which may or may not be,"

rejoined Unna, haughtily, "of this be assured, *thou* shalt not profit by my defection, neither thou nor the wretched namesake of Count Rodna. Who is there breathing, who would serve, whom they have contributed to injure, and must necessarily hate?" *

"Nay," replied Swartz, persuasively, rising from his seat, and pacing the narrow cell as he spoke, "who, rather, would care to save, who has so injured them? Is not a price set upon the head of Count Ragotzy?"

"And if so," rejoined Unna, sullenly, and in a low quick tone, "there may have been good cause and excuse for that, for what you can tell, sir equerry; but, whether or no," she continued, more earnestly, and with some manifestation of feeling, "there will be ample vengeance exacted, without my aid, without thy interference. When the prey of the mighty one be retaken, it is notthou, Luke Swartz," she continued, fixing her eyes upon him she addressed, "shalt exalt thee by the rescue."

"Not more than thou and thy people will benefit, good Unna," returned the other, in his most urbane tones: "whatever stipulations you may please to make for their good, and their liberties, I am sure, the princely Sigismund will gladly ratify. The grant to the descendants of Thomas Polgar, will be respected under his rule, no less than by his predecessors."

A forced smile distorted the lip of the keeper, while Unna, in return, smiled her derisive sense of his words, but did not speak. Swartz paused, but presently resumed, as if on fuller consideration. "The edict of exile,† against the Cygani race, shall not even have partial operation in Hungary. Like the Saxon,‡ your

* Unna seems to have thought, with the philosophic historian, "Proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem læseris."

† That of the Augsburgh Diet in 1500.

‡ Geysa II., granted an asylum to the Saxons, A. D. 1143. Various rights and privileges were accorded them by Andre II. The high honor, in which these people were held in the century of our tale, may

freedom shall be guaranteed; also, like him, you shall have ground allotted, and dwellings built for you, and, where injured, your nation shall equally be entitled to redress with the Magyari."

Unna laughed outright. "A Cygani wants no such redress," she vauntingly exclaimed, and her whole figure seemed to swell out with new-born energy. "Revenge is his redress; his right arm the only minister he acknowledges, and if he fall, he has a whole nation for avengers. Much good to Germany did that uncompromising rescript of the sapient emperor, since when, nor life, nor property has been safe, throughout the vast extent of the empire. The exterminating hand hath passed over all the country, and its produce, man and beast. The hoarse discordant voice of the raven alone, gives note of animated being, where erst the peasant's merry pipe resounded. Is it not meet, think you, we write our freedom in the blood of our oppressors? The Cygani sports not the gem of moist-eyed pity, nor wears the lowly mien of timid mercy. Born amid wilds, and nursed on sunny heaths, we bear the brown blush on our wanton cheeks. 'Tis our boast to be the playmates of the winds, and the denizens of the elements. Inured to bold adventure, we herd in the forest, and track the wolf and wild boar to

be gathered from an epistle of Michael Brutus, ad Crotonem, lib. 3, p. 332. ann. 1577. The reader may be inclined to infer from the following passage, that their irruption into Transylvania occurred at a still earlier era than that which we have assigned: "La plus commune opinion et la plus vraisemble est que du tems de Charlemagne la nation Saxonne, qui resista si long tems à la puissance de cet Empereur, fut obligée de quitter l'Allemagne pour eviter d'être entièrement exterminée. Une grande partie se retira en Hongrie, et de la en Transylvanie."—Mem. du Comte Betlem Nicklos.

Bonfinius, Dec. 1. lib. ix., would seem to be the authority for the foregoing, in which he was followed by Thuanus Histor, lib. xi. p. 244. We believe both to have been in error; but our reasons for holding that opinion cannot be compressed within the limits of a note. Let the first coming of the Saxons have been when it may, their posterity constitute, at the present day, a considerable portion of the population of Transylvania.

their familiar den; nor will we ever abandon our liberal lives for domes, where man to man is bound in servitude. We disdain the thrall,—we are at eternal war with your chartered tyrannies, and, that our untamed spirits may be free for evermore, we shun your vassalage, keep aloof from your walled vars and cities—spit upon your laws, and for redress,—we need it not."

"But, by Sigismund, your grant shall truly be held inviolate," observed Swartz.

"Oh! — ay," rejoined Unna, with a half-suppressed sneer; "that, you mean, of the Bishop of Funfkirchen to my husband. Well, from the king Mathias, down to our present regent, with one single exception,—with one single exception, (mark me!) agent of Sigismund, *that of John of Zapola*, it has been observed and countersigned, and shall, if ever George Martinuzzi cease to rule, still be held inviolate; but not by that boy! — Luke Swartz, —not by that boy."

The baffled diplomatist stood for a long time motionless, with his head bent down. "By whom, then, good Unna?" he at length inquired. Is the child, Czerina, likely to uphold your peoples' privileges, so zealously, as would a kiral, who will feel himself indebted to your testimony, for the possession of his rightful inheritance?"

"Her weakness were our security," returned Unna; "but she, alas! is out of the question. The cardinal purposes, after raising the seige of Coloswar, formally to deprive her of all these territories."

"Whom, then, would he make sovereign?" demanded Swartz, exhibiting symptoms of surprise.

"Himself," answered Unna; "but since that Vicchy is led to fancy his heretic daughter heir of Hungary, the secret, you wot of, may get wind, and his eminence's proud character, may receive such a shock, that,——though that remains to be proved. Enough, Luke Swartz; neither you, nor any living, need hope to antedate a doom, which lies knit up, and woven in the skein of events. I

pierce your politics, sir! you are now commissioned to Queen Isabella, and, I doubt not, design still further to commit Eissenburg to your cause, under illusory visions of grandeur. I have only one word to object to this: you go not to Hermanstadt at all. Eissenburg is no longer a prisoner, but attends the regent to Coloswar; and, for the queen! — *mark my prediction*, Swartz. Whosoever would reveal to the widow of King John, the deception practised on her, before he opes his lips, will receive the penalty of his officious daring; whether you credit me or not, my words are binding, as the iron shackles of destiny, and, herein, will be verified in blood. You are a wise man, I know," she shortly added, in a tone of bitter contempt; "and will not be sorry to escape the risk,—however, if you hesitate, the means are at hand to enforce obedience. Now, for your answer?"

Even while Unna was speaking, Swartz had revolved the matter over, and, ere she had concluded, he had decided on the course of action, it behoved him to pursue. The exquisite wariness and deep vindictiveness of this man's character, were qualities, perhaps, incompatible with the possession of any extraordinary intrepidity. Indeed it was almost essential to such a temperament that he wanted that degree of courage, which his persisting in his original intention would have inferred. Not that Swartz entertained the least faith in Unna's prophetic endowments; but he had reason to think, that she had the means of bringing about the fulfilment of her sinister prediction, by physical agencies, and he feared, that in case of opposition, she would have small scruple to employ them. Besides, being, to all intents, in her power, he saw he must submit to the will of his arbitress, if he would not put his life in instant jeopardy. He, therefore, intimated his acquiescence in her wishes, and requested leave immediately to retrace his steps, to where his hapless charge was deposited. Unna turned from the speaker without a word. She stood wrapt, and composed her

wrinkled brow, as if to deep thought. "To think," she muttered in an indrawn voice, "that Alaric, having had that youth once captive, should have suffered him to break bounds, maddens me! Had he known *who* was committed to his tender mercies!" Then, abruptly facing her companion, she said, "Whether you obtain your liberty depends on yourself; you must again resign the person of Sigismund into the custody of Count Ragotzy."

From whatever cause, Swartz kept silence. "Point out the exact spot where, at this moment, the youth lurks, and you are free," rejoined the gipsy.

Swartz still hesitated, fearful of hazarding a reply.

"Seek not to equivocate; but speak," said Unna.

"I cannot, if I would," at length, returned the keeper. "He is beyond my reach, having joined the predatory bands of the Wallachian."

"Of whom?" asked Unna.

"Of the Vilez, Richter Iwan," answered Swartz.

A livid and hideous smile deformed the ever rigid features of the old hag, and the hues of her yellow and withered countenance brightened. The nature of the response she would have rendered, however, cannot be affirmed, for, at that moment, the door opened, and a gipsy entering the hovel, in great seeming haste, communicated with Unna in their peculiar dialect. "Guide him hitherward," said the ancient crone, and the ragged messenger disappeared.

"Martinuzzi approaches," she cried, turning to Swartz; "so the subject we are discussing must be adjourned. Say," she continued, "with a peculiar expression of countenance, which had something insulting in it, "are you prepared to encounter the preserver of your life?" The blood of Swartz ran cold in his veins, and his thin face whitened to the hue of death, as, bending an imploring look on his companion, with a vehement motion, expressive of the undisguised extremity of instant fear, he deprecated the having to come in contact with the

regent. Unna glanced at him from head to foot, and her wrinkled visage contorted into a smile, the expression of which, superior to contempt, made his very blood to creep. After luxuriating in his manifest terrors for awhile, she observed, "If you would avoid meeting Martinuzzi, you will have to submit to close confinement, during the interval of his stay."

Eagerly, Swartz intimated his consent, when the gipsy raised the arras, and, stooping, indicated with her finger, a small door, ajar. "There, retire," said Unna, "and abide my will, but deceive not thyself with vain hopes. Shouldst thou even obtain the ear of Isabella, it were to no purpose. Thou wouldst act wiser to dig thine own grave, than seek to bring this tale to light; for no strategie upon earth can avert the destiny of the tale-bearer." Here the sound of footsteps, close at hand, hastened the movements of the keeper. Obeying the direction of his hostess's eyes, he passed rapidly through the narrow portal, and found himself in substantial darkness.

MANUSCRIPT XXI.

"Sunt patrem regni, sunt qui dixere tyrannum."

"Fallitur egregio quisquis sub principe credit
Servitium; nunquam libertas gratior exstat,
Quam sub rege pio."

A Tory.

We have no room to detail the particulars of what passed, subsequent to the exit of Swartz, in the cave-dwelling of the ancient Boszorkany. Martinuzzi did not make long tarriance there, and on his departure, as he lifted the latch of the low, small outer door of the hut; "I go," he said, and the eye of the warrior brightened up; "I go, to measure swords with Piadena.

"May victory wait upon your arms, as your cause is just!" answered Unna.

"'Tis that of my country," exclaimed Martinuzzi, with solemn energy.

"And her queen!" added the gipsy.

"Hungaria!" said Martinuzzi, and quitted the hut.

Unna remained, in the same position, for several minutes, after her visitor was gone. "Brave and incomparable spirit!" she exclaimed, "in the fortress of thy fame, there is but one point left unguarded, and through that, thou art doomed to fall. It is a childish puling humanity of thine, that would let a viper sting thee twice to the heart. Swartz's body, at my hands, thou mayest indeed require,

but it shall be in death, too late for thine own sake, perchance, yet in time for the security of Count Ragotzy, and his Cygani menyasgony.* I'll wait, however, till I hear further of Richter Iwan's new recruit,—he was too wandering to understand me that night; and Swartz may not have whispered in his ear, the nobleness of his origin; or, say he have, where is his proof? To time and the course of events, I refer for answer." In this resolution of being guided by circumstances, we leave the gipsy Unna.

It was sun-set, and the sailing clouds, like a rich argosy, bore bravely their freight of gold and silver, and the long shadows of Coloswar were projecting, in deeper and blacker shade, when the last division of the Hungarian patriots debouched, from under the leafy arches of the forest, upon a more open country, within a few miles of the beleaguered city. The regent's lines were being marked out, in front of the deep and twilight woods, on an elevated mound of earth, flanked by the lesser Samos, along whose banks the different leaders pitched their several tents, each surmounted by his proper banner; whilst at a little greater distance to the right, the supernumerary war-steeds were grazing at large. The woods resounded with the din of preparation. Here were artificers "accomplishing the knights," and fabricating warlike engines against the morrow. There were smiths and carpenters, occupied with their glowing forges, and deafening hammers. The appearance of so many gallant animals at apparent liberty,—the graceful forms of the men, as they were actively employed, in digging trenches, fixing pallisadoes, or running up the canvass tenements,—the scarcely waving branches of the dense wood, which hedged in the war-like amphitheatre, formed an animated foreground; while to the right, the eye caught partial glimpses, through the beautiful autumnal barrier, of the

* Cygani menyasgony—gipsy bride.

Abbey of Coloswar. Farther still, at the opposite side of the river, which was crossed by the sun's glancing light, his last effulgence gleamed on the spears and helmets of the advanced post-guard of the imperial host, lighting up the dense forest scenery beyond (which gradually bulged into gentler ascents, and larger swells of variegated woodland), and leaving finally a rim of burnished splendour along the blue line of the Bagartolke mountains, which (softened down, and suffused with a slight vapour, that caught the setting ray) closed the view in the haze of distance.

Martinuzzi was on horseback, surrounded by many of his capitanies and chief officers. Among the rest, Valentinian, Count Turascus, rode by his side. At the period of our tale, this magnat held the rank of commander-in-chief of the Hungarian army. He, moreover, exercised the functions, properly belonging to the office of palatine; which, since the death of Stephen Bathori, in 1535, had fallen into abeyance :—to this dignity, it was the avowed intention of Martinuzzi, to exalt him; but, owing to circumstances, the palatinate came not to be re-established, until a few years after the date of our present story, when it was revived, for a short period, in the person of Thomas Nadastis.* Near Turascus, was the graf Maylat, the son of that Stephanus Maylat, whose turbulence had troubled, not a little, the latter years of the reign of King John. Not far off, rode the Baron Balassi, the friend and compatriot of Maylat, and Thomas Nadastis, the uncle of the young graf. They had joined in the insurrection of Turascus, and were among the last bold men, who asserted the independence of their " order," equally disputing the right of the late king, to will his

* Since the death of Nadastis, the duties of this high office have been repeatedly performed by lieutenants, not holding the rank of palatine. In like manner, as in England, the chancellorship is sometimes put into commission. See Gasp. Tongell, Catalog. Palat. Reg. Hung. in Scriptores Reg. Hung. near the end of vol. 2.

authority, and that of Martinuzzi to assume it. Besides these, there were gathered together a crowd of nobles and knights,—all eminent for the greatness of their fortunes and families; or for their ecclesiastical and civil dignities. Summoned by the voice of the herald, and in obedience to the bloody glaive, that Martinuzzi had transmitted through the land, they attended the rendezvous, with the men-at-arms of their captaincies. Here were Stephanus Dobus, afterwards so famous for standing the siege of Agria; Mark Horwith, and Nicholas Zrinii, successively the governors of Zigeth, in the defence of which, they came to immortalize their names: Balthasar Zrinii, the son of the former; together with the powerful Barons Barcotius, George Tury, Mark Lilinensius, Melchior Balus, Scapha Vaida, John Banffy, and a long list of others, equally gentle, and of hardly less note. These were the principal magnats of Hungary, and were every one conspicuous for their own merits, or prided themselves on some desert of ancestry, handed down by the diploma of centuries. In addition to the forces at the command of these various chieftains, many of the principal cities of Transylvania had responded to his orders, and sent forth their fighting men to the field. Troops of horse, and bodies of foot soldiers, were observed for many preceding days, debouching through the forests, to join their countrymen. Martinuzzi, however, was well aware, that a large proportion of his captains were lukewarm partizans at the best. Most of the exiled noblemen, whose allodial possessions lay beyond the Theisse, followed him in consideration of his reputation in the art of war, seeing no other feasible means of speedily recovering their forfeited estates; whilst the Transylvanian lords, Barcotius, Nadastis, and others, had long felt the independence of their authority sadly curtailed, and their dignity sullied in the eyes of their feudatories, by the supremacy of the court of Hermanstadt. They were, therefore, desirous of

transferring the seat of the government to Buda, and so relieving their immediate territory of so strict and impartial a supervisor, as the regent: neither of these parties took the field, from the unmixed motive of love of country, or were otherwise much inclined to uphold the arbitrary sway of their ruler, longer than it subserved their own views; but there remained a third faction, whose politics went much further. Several of the leaders, fired with indignation, at the impending usurpation of Martinuzzi, and pitying the forlorn state of their youthful sovereign, were using their best endeavours to come to terms with the invader, deeming the interests of the daughter of King John, safer in the hands of the house of Hapsburg, although an enemy, than under the sinister auspices of her ambitious guardian. Some few of these latter, were in the secret of Isabella's wishes, to whose ears the death, or captivity, of the regent, were more welcome tidings, than would be a battle fought and won. Martinuzzi, though he might not be exactly cognizant of the extent of the defection, knew wherein lay the weakness of his force; and, to countervail any treasonable practices of the Hungarian magnats, had, for some time, maintained in his pay (as we elsewhere explained), a troop of mercenaries, in the capacity of body guard. These, from their fidelity, steady discipline, and indomitable courage, were reputed the *elite* of the regent's force. They amounted to twelve thousand men-at-arms, three-fourths of whom were infantry.

> "They sold their blood for foreign pay,
> The camp their home, their law the sword,
> They knew no country."*

On the steady services of these mercenaries, Martinuzzi principally relied, and they well merited his confidence. The cardinal, as was his invariable rule, during his cam-

* The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

paign, had cast aside his ecclesiastic habit, and his gold embossed accoutrements had little to distinguish him from the high-born magnats, who followed him to the field.

" Turascus," said Martinuzzi, in a low tone, which reached no other ears than those, for which it was intended; " I would not interrupt this business of pitching our tents, though truly, if all turn out, as I anticipate, it will be labour to little purpose."

" Wherefore, your eminence," replied Turascus in the same key, " not inform the capitanies, you intend surprising the enemy during the night."

" Even that he may indeed be taken by surprise," said Martinuzzi; " see you not, that, of these self-styled patriots, one half is false, and t'other half fickle? If we would not find Piadena drawn out in battle array, we must keep close counsel, my friend, till the moment for action. Our setting about these works, as if for a settled encampment, will blind all parties; and once get them engaged, without having previously held correspondence with yon outposts, and I'll ensure my heroes playing an honourable part, through sheer necessity. Within an hour, Quendi Ferens must have crossed, and he has engaged to hold the enemy employed, until our main army take its position, on the opposite banks of the Samos. I shall not stir, however, till I receive the despatch I look for; then, only let Raoul time well his sally from Coloswar, and, by the Holy Trinity! ere sunrise, we shall have a good account to render to Ferdinand, of his audacious ambassador."

" Every thing promises fairly," observed Turascus.

" Truly, my lord," said Martinuzzi, " unless the blow we aim be decisive, it were better never stricken. I left Mark Antoine Ferraro, the secretary of this Piadena, half persuaded of my submission to his master's will. I felt my defiance were best learned in the discomfiture of the Austrian arms. The regality he proffered, as the price

of my winking at his invasion of Transylvania, please God ! shall never be at a foreigner's disposal."

He paused, and Turascus was necessarily silent, for he feared, at the moment, to trust his voice in answer.

"If Providence," continued Martinuzzi, "will have me weigh my head with the holy crown of St. Stephen, I must wear it, Count Turascus, by virtue of the sword that accompanies it. Hungary and Transylvania, while I hold sway, shall be held in fief of no potentate in Europe." Martinuzzi's eye brightened with his theme.

"Has your eminence any intention, then?" interrogated Turascus, after a short pause, in a stifled tone.

"Stranger things have happened in Hungary, my lord," interrupted the cardinal. "The Magyari will scarcely be sorry, for they will remember our national adage."

"The crosier hath doubtless ever proved an easy sceptre, but I know no example of its having been exerted as such, save by right of office, and in conformity to the laws," said Turascus, with a brow somewhat overclouded, and with more distance of manner than before.

"'Tis critical sport, trifling on the verge of fate," rejoined Martinuzzi, changing a topic, which he began to find embarrassing. "Have the pontoons been thrown across the stream, over against yon grove ?"

"By incessant labour, that necessary preliminary is all but accomplished," replied Turascus. "The volunteer knight, bearing neither crest or plume on helmet, nor cognizance on shield,—our vizor'd compatriot in this expedition, has the present ordering of the work. I will now, however, with your leave, join him, and see to their completion;" and Turascus turned his horse's head, in the direction of the grove.

"I hope to ford soon after midnight, my lord," said Martinuzzi, as he reined his own courser aside. "We shall have the advantage of the moon ; and Turascus —" Martinuzzi paused, till he again got his horse neck and

neck, with that of the general, when he subjoined, in a slow and significant voice—"I'd recommend your holding small speech with that nameless knight; my reasons you shall learn hereafter, when you will allow my caution was not given without cause. Now, time presses—I will detain you no longer."

The countenance of Turascus exhibited some marks of his surprise; he made no reply, however, and after an obeisance of unwonted gravity, returned with an infinitely less degree of stiffness, he gave his steed the rein, and dashed a-head like an arrow.

The character of the defender of Buda, seems to have been that of an honourable man, and a lover of his country; and although ever ready to espouse the interests of Isabella, Martinuzzi did not, on that account, hesitate to name him commander-in-chief of the Hungarian army. So that the military ability of the general, he had vanquished, proved one of the main pillars of the regent's authority.

Turascus, deeming that any further manifestation in favour of the co-ordinate sway of the queen regent, would only eventually militate against the fortunes of her daughter, had long tacitly submitted to Martinuzzi's usurped authority. Like our own Blake, a century later, he was content to do the state good service, though the existing government was one, whose title he neither acknowledged, nor approved of. In common with other Hungarian magnats, he was governed by nearly similar feelings to those, which Appian of Alexandria well describes to have favourably influenced the Roman people, towards the tyranny of Sylla; they thought it called in question their humanity (φιλανθρωπία), to hate that power, how tyrannical soever it were, that was joined with the public good. *

* See Appian, Εμφυλίων, the 1st book. But, indeed, this author and placeman was a sad Tory. We refer the reader to a passage, some few pages after the sentiment quoted above, beginning και μοι θαῦμα κατα-

"So, that, which I all along misdoubted, is now too evident," communed Turascus with himself, as he bent his course towards the Samos. "This raven has *cancelliered* so long over the royal unicorn, * only to ensure inevitably the destruction of his victim. But it will hardly consist with my gratitude and honour, to stand by, and witness the fell swoop. Yet what remains? Am I called upon to jeopardy the independence of my country, which only this prelate, of all *men* living, can and will uphold, in the teeth of king and kaisar, for the sake of a name; and perhaps, after all, by my interference, only precipitate his measures of violence? Am I, in fate's despite, to essay, how long the feeble grasp of feminate authority can hold the truncheon of command, whose weight, in a realm so fierce as ours, must depend entirely on the firmness and dexterity of the hand, which sways it? 'Tis a nice point for a sorry casuist like me. At all events, these insolent invaders must first receive their merited chastisement, and then, perhaps—"

φαίνεται. Appian's works abound in such. Whether it be to his credit or otherwise, this deponent saith not; we state a fact, but disclaim all inference. Appian, however, be it observed, was scarcely so servile a courtier as some other writers under the empire; for instance, Dion Cassius. See the opening of that historian's 44th book.

* In allusion to the escutcheon of Martinuzzi, wherein he aptly introduced a unicorn, the ensign of the house of Zapola, and a raven, being that of the monastery where he was educated. Itaque in scuto, says his chronicler, quo deinceps usus fuit Martinusius visitur Unicornis Zapoliorum insigne, (Wagner, Analecta Scep. p. 4.) et corvus imminens signum ordinis religiosi Paulinorum, cujus auctorem divum Paulum eremitum, corvi ministeris nutritum ferunt. The following verses, on the occasion of Martinuzzi's erecting some magnificent edifices, throw a light on the origin of this device. They are by a contemporary writer.

Quæsivit præsul virtute Georgius ampla
Hæc arma et titulos, natus de stirpe Croata
Hic unicorni et corvum prebere alimenta
Cernis, sic fide et curis vigilantibus aptus
Assidue regi staduit servire Joanni,
Et posuit impensis longuine hæc præmia fame.—MDXLII.

The irregularity of the ground soon obscured the palatine elect, from the view of the regent, as, turning his steed in a different direction, he rode slowly alongside of the Grafs Maylat and Balassi, and another capitany; who, regardless of his noble companions, was apparently amusing himself, by curbing the mettle of the animal he bestrode, so as to restrict his gamesome mood within the narrowest limits. Some such caracole of the manège, the writer confesses to have sometime played off, by dint of spur and curb, that he might catch admiring maidens' eyes, and frighten babes withal. In the present case, however, the quadruped seemed to be putting forth his paces for his proper pastime; the rider, indeed, restrained his managed steed, with that habitual skill and slight handling of the reins, and imperceptible pressure of the limbs, which betokened the experienced horseman; but the reasoning instinct of the brute came somehow to divine, that the directing mind was amissing, so he thought fit to evince his contempt for mere finger and thumb, by persisting in his prancings and curvets, when, according to all the rules of equitation, he should have obeyed the rein. The spurred and belted knight in question, was far advanced in years, and the few white hairs, which parted below the helmet, over the forehead, crowned with venerableness an aspect, which, even in other respects, was exceedingly prepossessing. This latter epithet may seem inapplicable to the physiognomy of age, but 'tis a phrase to our taste, since, barring our philanthropy, where lovely young women are in the case, all of human sympathy remaining to us, is centred (albeit not superannuated ourselves) on virtuous senility.

"Banffy," said the regent, coming close up to the bridle-rein of the venerable magnat, "I have noted, with uneasiness, thou hast kept aloof, since what time we set out on this excursion. Such is not thy wont, my friend; wherein have I offended?"

The cavalier made no answer, being, apparently, too

much occupied in watching the play of the sun-beams, on the craggy summit of the Bagartolke hills. After a minute's pause, the regent resumed.

"Why man, the gloom on thy brow will not be lightened, or refract yon brightness of the mountain top, by turning thy face to the west. Instruct me, that I may expiate my involuntary transgression."

Banfly looked graver than before, as, with a stiff, formal inclination, whose humility mingled the feather of his helmet, with his horse's mane, he replied: "It would ill beseem one of my condition, to comment on your eminence's conduct."

Maylat turned aside his head, to hide the irrepressible sneer, that stole athwart his countenance.

"Nay now, you mock us," returned the cardinal, "and 'tis clear there's more in this. My lord, does our hurried movement dislike you?"

A glow of fierce pride, overspread the countenance of the ancient chief, but he made no reply, for near a minute; "My lord cardinal," he at length exclaimed, with uncontrollable energy: "'Tis now five-and-twenty years, since Spanish hirelings, and Austrian levies, laid waste my rich possessions, pillaged my castles, and driving away my flocks and herds, left John Banffy, neither food, nor covering, and all for what, your eminence? For his inviolable attachment to his anointed king. When the good dame prayed me, on her knees, that I would heed the overtures of Ferdinand, I spurned her where she knelt, and gave her to know, I had but one wife, and one sovereign, and that my loyalty to John of Zapola, was based on an oath, as sacred, as that of my fidelity to my spouse.* With yourself, my reverend lord, I waited on the royal exile, in the house of Jerome Lascus, and in requital, the archduke left me neither hold,

* See Pet. de Reva, cent. vi. in script. Hung. p. 714.

nor hearth,—land, nor *szustors*, nor living thing, unrifled, unscathed, unslain, in all the broad country of my fathers. The ashes of my kindred, and my king, loudly call on me, never to desert my loyalty; and, by the holy rood! the brief, and only hours of happiness, I have since passed, are those, when, with harness on my back, and my true sword in my hand, I raise my battle-cry, of Banffy and revenge!"

The Counts Maylat and Balassi, turned their looks upon each other, and exchanged glances, of peculiar meaning; and the old chieftain, after a moment, added; "Judge, from what I have said, how far it is likely, your sudden expedition troubles me."

There may have been something, in the above pouring forth of the ancient capitany, that did not well attune with the feelings of him, to whom it was addressed. Banffy's delivery may have been over-vehement, and so have jarred on the regent's ear; or worse, his allusions may have jarred on the regent's conscience. We only know, that Martinuzzi, after labouring to conceal a movement of resentment, coldly remarked, in return:—

"I must, then, have been under a mistake, my lord," and, without another word, he walked his horse a little space forward.

"Your lordship is monstrous bitter, this fine afternoon, methinks," cried young Maylat, approaching nearer the Count Banffy.

"How so?" gruffly inquired Banffy.

"Could you entertain his highness, with nought but themes of loyalty, and fidelity, and such anti-Mohachian subjects? Know you not, they are grown out of favour, since King Lewis lost his life, and crown, by going his own gait? You are not in the mode."

"'Twas too cutting, my lord, by my faith! to raise the memory of your meeting in Poland," observed Balassi, who had just joined the speakers.

"And worse to allude, with such caustickness, to John of Zapola," proceeded Maylat; "whose very name is wormwood, in the ear of his eminence."

The nobles stopped, and their hearer remained silent, for some moments, ere he replied, with considerable sternness: "I neither know, nor wish to know, your meaning, gentlemen. I can imagine no ears, in which the name of Zapola, should sound more bitterly, than in his, young sir, whose father, by his traitorous deeds, brought on the last illness of that good king; or his, my lord," (turning to Balassi) "who was, himself, in open and avowed hostility, at the time of John's decease," and saying these words, the old chief, to abridge further communication, gave his steed the rein, and galloped off."

"Thank Heaven, he has left us," said Maylat; "he's like an unstrung viol, that strikes too harsh a note, and jars all ears alike. But ha! what savage fellow's this?" he suddenly exclaimed, waving his hand, with a gesture of forbiddance. "Hold to your saddle, Balassi! Stand back, horrible abortion! and fright not our horses from their paces!"

This adjuration was addressed to a wild, and hirsute object, which that instant darted into the midst, from beyond the dark boles, that, in that quarter, walled in the view. The figure was that of a man, round whose loins was wrapt a fragment of goatskin, over which flowed a loose cloak, of the same raw material. The arms, feet, and legs, were bare, and the ghastliness of his aspect might be termed sepulchral. The long, elf locks, guiltless of comb or scissors, descended, in sable flakes, about his neck and shoulders, and hanging down, around his extenuated and cadaverous visage, mingled with a beard of extravagant length. The large, black eyes rolled, with all that vague brilliancy and fire, alike akin to genius, and madness; and which almost seem proper to the temperament of such zealots, as are inclined to indulge, in the imprudent fervours of religion. His stature

was of a height, that bordered on the gigantic; and the long strides of his sprawling limbs, followed one another with such rapidity, that he measured the space between the greenwood shade, and the young count, ere Maylat had ceased speaking.

"Ha! know you not the renowned Dr. Stancari?" returned Balassi; "who would mulct the Godhead of two-thirds of his glory, although, in his single person, he incarnates the triple spirit of law, divinity, and physic. Dr. Stancari, the upholder of the divine right of 'the powers that be:'* the army's leech, and, under favour of his eminence be it spoken, their spiritual guide and cynosure."

"His reverence's fame has spread far and wide," answered Maylat, with affected deference, while his lip scarcely curled, with an ironical smile; "but I shame to own, this is my first introduction."

"Doctor, what's in the wind," demanded Balassi; "that you burst upon us so abruptly?"

"I am emboldened herein," replied the learned Orson, "even as one, who bringeth good tidings; my feet have been urged to the uttermost, yea, they have been unto me, as the feet of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, and I have not slackened my speed."

"Whence comest thou in such hot haste?" again inquired Balassi.

"From the half-tribe of Manassez," answered the examinate, after a long pause.

"Speak plain, man," cried Maylat; "what tribe?"

Stancari hesitated. "I come from the strong hold of Coloswar," said he at length.

"At whose behest?" again interrogated the chief.

"At that of his excellence, even Count Raoul, the castellan of the city."

"Ha! by what strategie didst contrive to elude the

* Nic. Olah. Comp. Su. Æt. Chron.

vigilance of the besiegers' outposts?" exclaimed Balassi.

"That is a secret for the ears of the man of Baal."

"I wot not whom you mean," said Maylat; "there's no such town as Baal, in all Hungary."

"He stands arrayed in the gorgeous livery of Babylon," continued Stancari.

"The dog raves; there's no such person!" cried Maylat.

"Who was't wrought great deeds in times past, and even now, girdeth his loins, and hath set up a standard in the land, and will, peradventure, work out the delivery of his country, even as Judas Maccabeus, the son of Mattathias, saved Israel, of yore? Verily, he is the man I would behold."

"What does the arch-heretic prate of?" said Maylat.

"Heretic!" exclaimed the doctor, indignantly; "ay, 'tis the common term of ignominy on all, who dissent from the abominations and authority of Antichrist."

"Methinks, thou art nearer Antichrist than any here, you libellous charlatan! What warrant have you for preaching against his holiness the pope, and reviling the blessed saints?"

"My warrant is contained in the Book of Life!" answered the doctor: "verily, I say unto you, I am one, raised up to break in pieces the brazen serpent, and call it Nehushtan, and to testify against the idolatries of Bell, and point to the *integros fontes*, — shouting unto ye aloud, 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.'"

"A pretty pass for the church, truly," rejoined Balassi: "if she heeded the invitation of visionaries like thee, who haunt the path of paradise, and flutter, like the bee, about its perennial blossoms, but, unlike the bee, only to extract poison from their sweets! Even John Huss, whose unbelief brought him to the stake, spake reverently of the Holy Trinity; but thou! — what arch

devil is't, that prompts thee to out-heretic the heretics, and question the Godhead of Jesus Christ?"*

"Verily, is it not written," answered Dr. Stancari, "'Unus est mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus?'— homo — do you mark; and again ——"

"Have done with thy blasphemous jargon!" interrupted Maylat, "and interpret thy tidings to us."

"That were impossible," replied Stancari, "inasmuch, as they are contained in a missive to your regent; — where shall I fall in with him?"

"Affairs of import detain his highness just now; but you may relieve yourself of your commission, and we will do your message," returned Balassi.

"Verily, I ask not your aid," said Stancari; "is not your country desolate? — your cities burned with fire? — do not strangers devour it in your presence? — is it not their overthrow? It is no small matter I am upon — I will not be delayed — I will seek the man of Belial myself."

"Do you distrust us, Italian dunghill?" hotly exclaimed Maylat.

"My lords," returned Stancari, "I am about the embassage of the state, — stay me not."

On the word, the doctor hasted forwards, leaving his noble interlocutors, for a moment, abaft and disconcerted, looking like the "two witty peers" unto whom "Johnny Trott" "taught a moral lesson," as reported among the minor effusions of one of our most delightful versifiers.†

"By heavens! this cast will make or mar us," cried Balassi, eagerly, standing on his stirrups, "the villain turns to his left; — ha! he hies him to the regent's tent. Now then, for one bold stroke! Martinuzzi, providen-

* Is it not probable that the Unitarians in Transylvania, who, at this day, are a numerous and increasing body in that province, might trace their origin to the preachings of Dr. Stancari?

† Goldsmith.

tially, is not within hail; stay here, — I'll be back on the instant."

"What do you intend?" inquired Maylat, amazedly.

"This is no moment for explanation," returned Balassi; "only keep a strict look out, after the motions of that heretic dog, — every thing depends on that; this hour is big with fate." So saying, Balassi galloped off, at full speed, not waiting any answer.

The young graf, though without well apprehending the purport of Balassi's directions, not the less attended the progress of the doctor, with the utmost vigilance of his eye. The rounded sun had disappeared amid the grateful adieus of a thousand choristers, but something of his glory remained behind, and yet gilded the loftier branches of the forest, though his yellow light no longer yblent the heavens with the earth, on whose bosom he had momentarily reposed. A few stars looked forth from the chequered skies, athwart which, long fleecy streaks, that had already discharged their cargo of precious hues, swept hurriedly, and the wild figure of Stancari mingled with the doubtful creations of twilight, and was soon lost in the depths of shadowy earth, where stood the lofty tent of Martinuzzi, rearing its snowy cone, in strong relief against the blue horizon, still and silent, as a deserted palace. The cooler breath of twilight now wailed mournfully, and freshened the sear and deepening woods, whence Balassi reappeared, at the head of a small body of men-at-arms. "Whither," he asked impatiently, "has the savage betaken him?"

Maylat, still doubtful of the other's purpose, indicated, with his finger, the form of Stancari, darkening in the gloom.

"What! towards his highness' tent?" exclaimed Balassi, in apparent apprehension; — "Heaven avert the traitor's purpose! On! lest worse befall."

The two chiefs, having consigned their horses to the care of some present, the whole body rapidly moved for-

wards, in the direction pursued by Stancari. As they were advancing into the shadows of the camp, the military made a sudden halt, and refused to introduce themselves to the inside of the tent. In vain Balassi remonstrated; they unanimously alleged their disinclination to proceed, without the regent's command.

"What perverseness!" exclaimed Maylat; "the steel of the assassin may be, even now, aimed at his eminence's life!"

"The regent's orders are imperative, that none, on any pretence, should intrude, whenever his pennon-staff is planted at the entrance of his tent," observed the spokesman of the party.

The grafs retired a few paces, and conferred together for an instant; then, bidding the men-at-arms remain where they stood, they crept beneath the canvass enclosure, and disappeared from view. The newly-pitched tenement was spacious, and the shades of night wrapt the apartment, wherein Maylat and Balassi now found themselves, in deep gloom. For a minute after they recovered their erect attitude, the chiefs paused irresolute under the canopy. They could perceive, by the aid of a lamp, whose flickering light made half transparent the veil-like partition, which divided the tent, the shade of a solitary figure, moving in the adjoining apartment. It was, probably, the man they sought, but they could not be sure, that it was not some different person.

"Keep guard here, and be still," said Balassi, to his companion, in a hushed whisper; then, on tiptoe, the count crossed to the side, which was illumined by the shadowy light, from the adjoining division. He drew his sword, and cautiously made a slight rent, by pricking the back curtain of the tent with his weapon. Placing his eye against the aperture, he gazed into the apartment. What he there beheld, apparently struck him with amazement, and he slightly started back: the involuntary movement attracted the attention of him within;

for, on Balassi again applying his orb of vision to the canvass slit, he remarked that individual standing, in a listening attitude, and the next moment, saw him step forward, and put aside, a sort of figured hanging, which served to conceal the communication between the two divisions of the pavilion.

The count would now have silently effected his retreat, but, in his first hurried movement to that end, he met with an obstruction in a quarter, where he least looked for it—he felt himself suddenly embraced, and his arms pinioned forcibly to his side. At first, the graf's idea was that he was seized by Maylat. "Fire and furies! are you mad?" he demanded in a suppressed voice. The curtain at this moment being drawn aside, the broken ray from beyond, sufficed to darkly shadow out the contending figures. Maylat, sword in hand, rushed forward to assist his friend; it was but three paces, but ere that distance could be measured, the weapon of Balassi, having been wrested from his grasp, intercepted that of the graf Maylat, against which it clashed in mortal combat.

The figure, standing within the curtained recess, remained a silent, and seemingly unmoved spectator of the inexplicable scene. Presently, a noise without, like the gathering hum of armed footsteps, is heard, and the flame of torches, flashing against the canvass walls of the tent, gradually, though still dimly, lighted up the interior,—there the confusion approaches its height,—Maylat lies prostrate on the earth, and over him stood Dr. Stancari, ready to strike.

"Forbear!" exclaimed the individual within the entrance, in a commanding tone.

The victor reverted his head, and, at that moment, Balassi, having recovered from his first surprise, seized with vigour, the doctor's extended arm, and raised his poignard to end the strife at a blow. As Stancari staggered, and fell senseless by the side of his late antagonist, that chieftain, profiting by his opportunity, raised himself

to his feet and made off, at the same entrance, by which he had introduced himself. Balassi was in the act of stepping after him, when a sealed paper, lying near the spot, where he and Dr. Stancari first struggled in the dark, caught his eye, and with a joyful exclamation, he rushed back to obtain possession of it. The individual, who had hitherto remained stationary, now, for the first time, as if interested in that sudden action, measured a few paces, and then stooped, with the apparent view of frustrating Balassi's purpose;—but the count, having secured the paper, before the other could anticipate his movement, quickly regained the same point of egress, by which Maylat effected his retreat. He lifted the canvass, beneath which he had already half thrust his body, when another person shoved aside an opposite entrance, and passing into the pavilion, commanded the count to stay. The organ tones of that voice were neither to be mistaken nor disobeyed, and Balassi remained momentarily transfixed, as by a spear.

"Quick, quick! my friend," cried Maylat, from without, at the same time grasping the graf's wrist. Resolving on his line of conduct with the quickness of thought, Balassi slipped the missive of Stancari, into the other's extended hand, accompanying the consignment with the deep significant whisper—"Fly! attend our appointment!" Then dropping the canvass, the graf drew back into the tent, and stood, resolved and silent, in the presence of Martinuzzi.

The regent eyed him sternly for an instant, and afterwards held serious, but brief discourse, with the other tenant of the pavilion. "I deeply regret this matter, sir," said Martinuzzi, "and, credit me, the more so, that I forbear, since it appears to be your will, alluding to the high honour, conferred by such unexampled confidence, and to my commensurate shame at this obtrusion. Would Abu Obeidah deign to signify his wishes, in re-

spect to the inexplicable occurrence of this last half-hour?"

"Your eminence commands here," replied the Emir, with a faint smile, and an obeisance even more dubious, then, after a pause he added—"You should be informed, however, that that gentleman hath obtained a letter, it may be of importance, which I rather think dropped from the girdle of the man, he hath slain."

"Francis Stancari," said Martinuzzi, casting his eyes on the bloody corpse, ever a follower of camps, with the fiendish hope of contaminating the souls of the men, by his pestilent heresies—otherwise, a faithful servant of his adopted country. I have proved that man—may the mercy of Christ yet save his immortal part! The charitable sentiment fell meekly from his lips, while a correspondent feeling spake in his gestures, and beamed in the mild light of his eye." An expression of derisive scorn traversed, like a cloud, the imperious visage of the Emir—he moved away in silence. "But what did I hear?" presently exclaimed the regent—"a missive! it must be the dispatch, I looked for by this time, from Quendi Ferrens—my lord Balassi, I will thank you for it."

"Your eminence must needs seek elsewhere," replied Balassi, nothing daunted; "the letter in request is beyond my power to get at."

"How sir!" ejaculated Martinuzzi.

Abu Obeida slowly turned about, and looked fixedly in the face of the graf, who remained mute.

"Do you dare dispute our commands?" said Martinuzzi, and his voice trembled with emotion.

"Your jurisdiction herein, my lord," replied Balassi, with an appearance of perfect firmness, "is as bounded as your power. I demur to the one; for what right have you to a letter, unless you can show it to be your property? Providence circumscribes the other, for that letter is not in my possession."

"In Stamboul,"* remarked Abu Obeida, addressing the surprised and indignant regent, "we are more expert at determining rare differences between authority and treason. The twang of the bow-string never fails to convince those refractory slaves, whom rebel inclinations have drawn from their allegiance."

Martinuzzi bit his lip, and was about to speak, but the impetuous chief again took up the word—"and glad will the tyrant *Kanouny*† be, when the argument of the bow-string shall be the sole code of Erdély, and his capigee pashi, the only law-giver. Will he not, think you, sir Turk?"

The blood of the Emir rushed into his face, and flushed his swarthy visage, while the big veins of his forehead, like corded lines, swelled beneath his green turban, almost to bursting. At first he motioned his hand, quicker than light to his weapon; but as instantaneously withdrawing it, he stood mute and moveless, whilst the impatient curl of his lip, the heaving of his chest, the indignant breathing from the distended nostril, and the bloodshot eyes, rolling with hyena-like ferocity, belied his constrained silence.

Whatever impression the retorts of Balassi made on Abu Obeida, it could hardly parallel the confusion, which every muscle and movement of Martinuzzi betrayed. "Bold traitor! you give an undue licence to your tongue!" he exclaimed, in an imperative, though choaked voice,.. choaked with conflicting emotions, that he could not reconcile, nor keep down. Then turning to the Ottoman, he said in a deprecatory tone—"You perceive how powerless I am herein, and are too magnanimous, to attribute the saucy diatribe of a factious regicide to my discredit, with the mighty sultan Solyman."

Abu Obeida scowled upon both with eye of death—his

* Constantinople.

† Kanouny: Solyman—so surnamed from his having introduced the use of cannon in Turkey.

slippered right foot beat nervously, against the rough dolman of the murdered preacher, and he muttered between his teeth, with contemptuous force, — " Powerless, truly !"

Martinuzzi, meanwhile, stood directly in the line of fire of both, exposed to the consequences of their reciprocal animosity.

" A factious regicide !" repeated Balassi, fiercely— " take back the discourteous charge—regicide ! arrogant prelate ! who most merits that appellative ? He, who has at length thrown off the mask, when it has become too threadbare for use, and avows his design on the crown of Hungary ! — He, who, even now, men say, is compassing, how to glue that type of sovereignty to his traitor brow, in the blood of her highness, the lady Czerina, who, when a child, so mysteriously escaped the machinations of her guardian's black confessor, in the vaults of Hermanstadt: —Is not such an one a regicide, rather than myself, who would peril my life to avert the destruction, which hangs over my queen ?"

Martinuzzi was evidently much agitated; his breast heaved with convulsive throes, and his eyes wandered from the chieftain to the Emir, and then back, but whatever were his thoughts, he did not arrange them into speech, while, after a pause, Balassi again broke forth—

" Time and circumstance have all but sapped the feeble bulwark, your hypocrisy had erected round the truth. Think you, that men do not see through your purpose, in relieving Coloswar ? There is the regalia ! Oh, 'tis too palpable ! where are now the columns of the land, who should uphold the throne of Hungary ? Struck ! crumbled ! utterly fallen ! — Where Pereny ? in Vienna, the tenant of a dungeon, or a tomb,—by whose intrigues ? — Where the constable Vicchy ? outlawed.—Where Turascus ? dreaming of the palatinate, under the reign of Martinuzzi !—Where my friend, the noble Maylat ?— Where ? answer THOU, infidel !" He proceeded more vehe-

mently, approaching the Emir,—"decoyed by the bloody Peter, and assassinated by the Basha of Buda!—was he not? at the command of the circumcised despot of the East?—but by whose intrigue, hey, my lord cardinal?—ah! there's the point."

It would have been in vain to attempt to stem this tide of invective, at the flood; and the extreme passion of Abu Obeida grew every moment more decidedly irrepressible. He shook with suppressed rage, from limb to limb, and his livid features betrayed a strange mixture of wrath and menace.

Martinuzzi kept his eye fearfully upon the Emir, as he raised the canvass, and called out, in a feeble voice, "What, ho! my guard there!" At the word, a dozen men-at-arms passed into the pavilion. "Attach that gentleman," said Martinuzzi. The soldiers closed round Balassi. "Search," continued the regent, with some eagerness, though the tones of his voice were faint, "if there be a letter about his person."

The order was observed, and a narrow scrip of paper was delivered into Martinuzzi's hands. He rapidly glanced his eye over it. "*Fail not to rendezvous at midnight at the old hut in the forest glen.—Alaric Polgar.*"

Martinuzzi heaved a deep sigh, whilst a serener, though perhaps, more mournful expression, succeeded the previous working of his wan features. With bland address, he turned to Abu Obeida, and again essayed to appease the storm, that Balassi had conjured in the Emir's bosom. "I have arrested the libellous traitor, gracious sir," he said, "even at the risk of giving further offence, by the obtrusion of my guard. Will you instruct me, how I can best wipe out the remembrance of this unfortunate business?"

Abu Obeida hardly stirred. At first, he only replied by that withering and bitter smile, with which he was wont to intimate his mortal resentment, and which, like the play of the lightning round some hideous monument,

only rendered more ghastly the fierce immobility of his countenance. He stood, coiled up in the folds of his still soul, from whose dark recess he sent forth his gleaming eyes, and fixed them on those of Martinuzzi. The regent started. There was a dangerous import in that wild, dark, and vindictive gaze, which his soul refused to read, and he waited, with painful forebodings, the explanation. "Regent of Hungary," answered the Emir, at length, speaking between his ground teeth, "whether this insult was planned, I cannot tell; — perhaps not — I think not; but your honour demands your conceding the utmost satisfaction in your power, and, however inadequate such atonement, I will even try to forget this night's deadly affront. I have, I see, exposed myself to opprobrium, and — but enough — you will grant me all, I have a right to demand."

"In what way can I evince my regret?" inquired Martinuzzi, in a faltering voice.

"Order yon officer, to cleave, at a stroke of his sabre, the villain's head, from off his shoulders," replied Abu Obeida, with dreadful calmness, though in that authoritative voice, that was rarely disobeyed.

Martinuzzi recoiled in person, as in spirit. Almost instantly, however, he resumed his dignified and upright attitude, and thus, with a countenance, beaming with contempt of consequences, and in tones, that gathered firmness, as he proceeded, made answer, — "That I am innocent in this matter, I hope I need not asseverate; that I most deeply regret your having been subjected to such indignity, more especially when confiding your person to my hospitality, and honour, I will not repeat. How much it is my interest, at this moment, to draw still closer the ties, between myself and the magnificent sultan, instead of weakening their force, I am scarcely ignorant; but, at the same time, — pardon me, gracious sir, — though this place privilege thee, thou hast presumed

too far. Heaven witness for me! while I have breath to protest against the ignominy, never shall nobleman of Hungary and Transylvania, receive sentence of death at the mandate of a foreigner; still less would I endure to be an accomplice in the deed, even though — again, pardon me, sir," — he added, with a slow inclination of a head, that seldom bent to power, — "the mighty Solyman himself dared insult George Martinuzzi, by such a proposition."

The picture of baffled vengeance, that the gestures and countenance of Abu Obeida exhibited, was only the more striking, from the evident exertion of the Emir, to rein in his passion, or, at least, to prevent its excess becoming visible. Perhaps, for the first time in his life, he found himself in a situation, where his will was not paramount, and where the extreme licence of his vindictive disposition was set bounds to, by the resolute determination of another. The lesson was, at once, a memorable, and an excellent one; but, unfortunately, it stood alone, in a long career of irresponsible selfishness, and only irritated the wild beast, the θηριον* of despotism, it was not likely to chasten or subdue. The frenzy of his intolerable rage threatened to tear him asunder, and, whilst he yet shook, in this state of nervous excitement, Balassi again addressed him.

"So, sanguinary infidel!" he tauntingly cried, "his eminence understands his position better, than to share his justice-seat with thee, or thy inhuman master. Transylvania is so far free, and the gallant Maylat's murderer ——"

"Sends thee to hell, fool!" interrupted Abu Obeida, darting, like lightning, on the imprisoned chief. Seconding the word with the action, he plunged his glittering hangier, which he suddenly displayed, into the

* Aristot. apud Julian, p. 261.

broad chest of the Hungarian. Balassi tottered for a moment, and then fell back into the arms of the guard, deluging them with blood.

It was the deed of an instant. The soldiers, rallying from their consternation, were in the act of laying hands on the Emir, when Martinuzzi commanded them to look to the wounded prisoner. The Emir, returning his hangier to its sheath, slowly retired to the adjoining apartment. Martinuzzi bent over the dying count. Life was not yet extinct, but the flux of blood was so great, that a speedy dissolution was inevitable.

"Have you aught to say, or any request to make?" inquired the cardinal, with pitying tenderness of voice and manner.

"Only this," replied Balassi, in the feeble accents of death, — "it is rumoured abroad, that you intend to force her highness to wed the Austrian secretary, — is it true?"

"Suppose it were, can it concern you at such a moment? — think of your own immortal interests," answered Martinuzzi, raising a crucifix on high.

"Nay, speak to that point, I prithee, — is it true!"

"It is," said Martinuzzi.

"Change your purpose, then, I conjure you, by that cross!" continued the count, — "Antoine Ferraro is —" Balassi gasped.

"Oh, speak! leave me not in doubt! — why should not Ferraro wed her highness?"

"Because he is ——"

"What, what?" entreated Martinuzzi.

"Her mother's paramour!" replied the Magnat.

They were the last words he uttered. The next minute, the flame of the lamp of Balassi's life was extinct.

Martinuzzi left the tent, wrapped in moody abstraction. "'Twas a foul deed!" he murmured, to himself, "and

it irks my very soul to permit the murderer go hence, unarraigned, unscathed ; but he is here in double trust, and I must e'en leave his punishment, where this, together with a thousand similar atrocities, are entered up for judgment. Heaven is just, and, when the measure of their crimes is full, will launch destruction on him, and on his impious line ; — till then, ye wrathful elements, be tranquil !"

MANUSCRIPT XXII.

"I'll seek a readier path."

PARNELL.

"Quare per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter in sylvis."

VIRGIL.

SOME hours may have elapsed, since the spirit of the gallant Balassi took its flight, when the broad circle of the moon, rising, like a sanguine shield, in the distant skies, dimly illuminated the tall form of a man, hurrying along the margin of the Samos, where one branch of the divided river broke, with a shallow murmur, over the sandy shore. The rapidity of his pace seemed to evince, that the business he was on, was more than commonly urgent, while his availing himself of every advantage of cover, which the superincumbent cliff, or jutting crags, occasionally presented, betrayed his consciousness, that it was of a nature, requiring caution and concealment. The long, black gaberdine, girdled round the waist, and the immense cocked-hat, hanging over the forehead, proclaimed, at once, the religion and the race of the wearer. His dress and appearance, bespoke the itinerant Jew trader, whom not the extreme risk of life and lucre,*

* The Jews were banished from Hungary for their frauds and *supercheries*, by Louis II.—Thúrocz, Chron. Hung. part. iii. cap. 40. p. 106. and Bonfinius, Decad. ii. l. x. p. 350.

could deter from perambulating the country, and hanging on the skirts of armies, to purchase the spoils of the soldiers.

Under pretence of carrying on their customary traffic in old iron, the Hebrew people would often draw forth from their wallets, articles of great rarity and value, — the plunder of camps and cities. The night was peculiarly calm and serene, and the quiet, starlit view, far from unpleasing. In the distance, dominated the stern towers and battlements of Coloswar; their tall, dark masses, dimly painted against the blue sky; and, without the city walls, from which, in those days, the edifice was even more completely cut off, by a branch of the Samos, the tapering spires of the venerable abbey, tipped by the grey moonlight, glanced, wan and spectral, in mid-air. The watch-fires of the imperial encampment gleamed, with obscure lustre, on the high down afar off; and the spreading roofs of the warlike tenements, which distance, and the effulgent light, turned to silver, whitened the rising grounds; while, along the opposite shore of the Samos, the bosom of the clear stream mirrored the scattered trees, that skirted irregularly its banks, amid the illumination of innumerable bonfires, that darted their glowing light, across the undulating surface of the water. These had been kindled by the peasantry, at a little distance from the course of the river, as snares for cray-fish.

We have said the night was calm; but it was redeemed from lonesomeness, by the low murmur that, rolling off from the imperial camp, floated on the air, like the expressive voice of silence. All was hushed, in unison with the still slumbering scenery, and noontide hour, save when occasionally a bird was heard, hoarsely booming among the shallows, and the sound of creeping wavelets, as they just kissed the shore, and sunk to sleep with their own fruition, fell softly on the sense, like die-away-lovers' sighs; or when, at due intervals, the monotonous chal-

lenge of the sentinel along the ramparts, came mellowed by distance on the ear, returned by the single doleful howl of many a wakeful wolf-dog, from within the city, and the adjacent country. The Israelite pursued his undeviating path, for more than a mile alongside the river, when a curvature of its banks brought him within point of view of a small skiff, seemingly floating at rest, on the limpid bosom of the water, within a stone's throw off the shore.

"This is most opportune," said the wayfarer to himself. "In the neighbourhood of Coloswar, on the eve of battle, and at such an hour too! However, it will save me a full league from a wetting, though the fellow standing in that bark, methinks, must have addled his wits, to loiter there, it might have been till the new moon, waiting for a fare."

Thus marvelling in his own mind, our traveller reached the point where the lesser stream was lost in the greater, and there, beneath the shadow of a conspicuous rock, the tall and erect form of the ferryman could faintly be distinguished, at the further end of the vessel.

"Ho! paddle in, Charon," shouted the Jew.

The other answered the hail, by steering his slightly-built boat to the water's edge.—"Walter, is it you? Have you struck the blow?" he demanded, with breathless articulation, as he hove up out of the gloom.

The Hebrew did not appear to catch the inquiry, but strode nearer the boat.—"What may be the rate of passage across," he asked, somewhat authoritatively.

There was a considerable pause before the waterman again spoke.—"That varies with time and circumstance, and the quality of my cargo to boot," he at length replied; raising himself upright in his frail canoe." At extra hours, like these, I waft over your *dolbatsche** for

* Dolbatsche —infantry soldier.

a few hungarisches, * or kreutzers; your richter, or capitany, must come down with a hongree; † for your infidel of the Konigs-strasse, ‡ he pays part in old wares, and the rest I take out in Christian malisons, or, it may be, partly, a few dry cuffs with the reverse of my helve, by way of enforcement; but for your *szegeny legenys*, § they go gratis, for old fellowship sake. Under which head am I to class you, sir traveller?"

"Under the last named, my prince of ferrymen," cried the other, incontinently leaping into the light wherry, which shook with the impulse of his bound; "so a free freight, and a quick one, for I promise you, my minutes, this night, are too precious to be squandered on inaction."

"How!" cried the other, "what manner of man art thou, who claimest the freedom of my bark, yet neither knowest our pass-word, nor wearest Christian clothing? Go to—thou art but a Jew!"

"And so shouldst thou be, by thy unbelief," returned the traveller; "but behold! what think you now?"

On saying these words the false Jew unbuckled the girdle, that made fast his gaberdine, and threw open the dark disguisement. Immediately, the characteristic, and splendid vestures of a banditti chieftain caught, and reflected back the rays from above.

"By Heavens! Count Polgar!" was the irrepressible, though half-smothered ejaculation of the boatman.

"Ha! my *bon commorado*, we are acquainted it seems," exclaimed the Cygani leader, for it was even he; "but shove off, and tell me, as we float along, when, and where you served — methinks I bear no memory of your person."

* Two hungarisches almost equal one penny of our money.

† Hongree — a small gold coin, value about ten shillings.

‡ Konigs-strasse — the district of the Jews in the city of Buda.

§ Szegeny legenys — poor fellows, *i. e.* robbers.

The track of the canoe furrowed the sparkling stream, with a long line of silvered foam, that shone in the moonshine, like the floating scales of some river serpent, ere the boatman made answer.

"Nevertheless, I have lodged, of late, in your cunicular fortress, not a furlong from yon encampment."

"So lately trusted, and at large!" thought Count Ragotzy, fixing his dark eyes intently on the person of the individual, engaged in propelling the light skiff over the water.

The man was clothed in the common habiliments, which distinguished the *kanactz*, or cattle-keeper of the woods of Erdély. The sort of greasy and capacious hose, that encased his legs; the broad belt, set off with its triple row of metal buttons; the tough elm staff inserted therein, whose nether appendage of rusty iron, gifted it with something of the utility, though not the appearance of an axe; the tattered dolman of woollen cloth; the round felt hat, guiltless of a plume, and which, be-ribboned with all the colours of the rainbow, looked "like a black eye in a recent scuffle;" the leather strapped about the feet, just as the missionary Vanderkemp describes the shoes of the Caffres:—all these were points of costume peculiar to the *kanactz*, but were any thing, rather than characteristic of the garb of a ferryman of Coloswar. The front rim of the hat overshadowed the upper part of the man's face, and the cape of the mantle was contrivedly wrapt in such a manner, as to muffle his more subordinate features.

"It is not an age since you learned to feather your oars on these rapids, to judge by your vestments," said Count Ragotzy.

"My vestments," repeated the other, in an altered tone, "sooth to say, I selected them from your lordship's miscellaneous wardrobe, and, for my skill at my oar, 'twill improve by practice. To be plain with you, know, you are my first freight. I was, indeed, about to cross

on my own account, when your lordship came within hail."

"By H—ll! I should know that voice," cried Ragotzy; "and yet it cannot be."

"You are right, Lord Ragotzy," returned the other. "Fate, for once, is impartial: the renowned Egyptian and his lunatic captive, are embarked on the same bottom. Keep your seat steady, Lord Ragotzy, or, by the Holy Trinity! we both find land, where one of us, at least, would be loth to look for it."

The brigand chief mastered his first emotion, and, without speaking, occupied himself in re-buckling the broad girdle of his long black vest.

At the earnest request of his mother, Count Ragotzy had embraced Swartz's proposal to carry off Sigismund with him, to his robber-hold. Unna had since repeatedly urged on her son, that on no account, should he suffer the release of the unhappy possessor of the title of the murdered Count Rodna; she even exhorted him, rather than permit the youth's escape, to terminate his imprisonment in his blood. In conformity with these objurgations, though without at all apprehending their import, Ragotzy modelled his proceedings; and, on his having to return to Hermanstadt, with the view of compassing the abduction of Veronica, he had left the youth under the strictest surveillance of his band. Nevertheless, Sigismund contrived, during the brief absence of the Cygani leader, to give his guards the slip, and Ragotzy had remained, in ignorance of his fate, till the present encounter.

These explanations premised, we return to our story. The brigand and the young count had each his own anxious thoughts, on the subject of their meeting,—thoughts which neither cared to express in words.

"Now, in the Mano's name!" said the Cygani, internally, "what conjuration brings that youth, at such an hour before my eyes? Were it only for the interest my mother takes in him, I'll sift out his purposes, if, per-

adventure, his scattered faculties can be brought to any defined point."

"He answers me not," said Sigismund, (the argument of whose thoughts, we thus would render into a connected meaning)—"absent all day — so much I learned from Walter, who, I pray Heaven, miss not this opportunity through any inadvertence! But whither has the Cygani been? — doubtless, in Coloswar — his business there? and the name of his confederate? Ha! *that* it imports my knowing; but, above all, his present errand — alone, at midnight! — I must, and will understand that,—or else, after all, my long apprenticeship to dissimulation, and this last device, in hopes of meriting the gratitude of wretched Erdély, may prove a vain offering at the altar of my country. The regalia is in his possession. Oh, just Heaven! if I only knew where he had concealed the treasure, witness for me, that that fiend, in human shape, should not survive this meeting; but, however hard, I must yet dissemble; down, indignant heart! — 'tis not for long."

"I would fain inquire, what you have been doing with yourself, young gentleman, since you thought fit to decamp last week?" asked Ragotzy, after a minute's rumination. "Did you dislike your reception amongst us, or deem your subterraneous lodgment less adapted to sublime and pious contemplation, than that trembling tower of Hermanstadt, where we first became acquainted?"

"Nay, for that matter, you speak in ignorance," observed Sigismund,—"I have this day learned a strange truth, Lord Ragotzy, which — but that matters not. Credit me, our first introduction occurred long before the time you name, and was attended by circumstances, that I will not now recall, lest — what have I been doing, do you ask?—roaming about, a sort of volunteer guerilla, but under orders all the while, mind me; I only changed your service for a better."

"Say you so, my captious hero," returned Ragotzy;

"and what chieftain has the happiness to enrol you, among his warriors?"

"The Richter Iwan," replied Sigismund.

Ragotzy lowered his brows.—"Ha! the slaughterer of the brave Peter," he cried, "and my bitterest foe!"

"Dost thou then hate him, with such good-will?" demanded Sigismund.

"Do I not?—but he will die one of these days, and you may acquaint him, that I, Count Polgar, foretell his fate."

"'Tis a gipsy's prediction," replied Sigismund, "and the Richter is not a person to give faith to your people's prophetic pretensions. Nevertheless, I'll do your message;—shall I say Heaven is to close his mortal course?"

"Heaven!" repeated Ragotzy, with vehemence; "ay, Heaven and I will."

Sigismund half brought into light the axe by his side, fixing an inquiring eye upon the weapon, and then transferring the look to Count Ragotzy, as if to ask his meaning. A smile of bitter acknowledgment lit up the face of the brigand.

"Oh, I understand you better," said the youth, "you would have me bear your cartel to Iwan, so, content ye; but where is your gage? Receive this, as that of the Richter—'tis the badge of his troop, and only do you wear it on your helm, in battle, and the singular recollections connected with it, will cause him to recognise it among a thousand cognizances, and claim it of you, doubt not, though there opposed a barrier of steel betwixt you twain." Thus saying, Sigismund placed his hand within his vest, and drew forth a fragment of tartan, which he presented to Count Ragotzy, who, in return, handed him a valuable brooch, such as was commonly used by the superior chiefs and magnats, with which to clasp a peacock's feather, in their morion or calpac.

"Be it a challenge, though I meant it not," answered

the brigand, throwing himself carelessly back upon the seat. "Let Richter Iwan sport this jewel in my sight, and I will pluck it from his front, though he stood bulwarked by the choicest, that now lie couched upon their arms in yonder camp, or, if your chief incline to the usurper, though the body-guard of Martinuzzi, hemmed him round ——."

There was a moment's pause, which Ragotzy broke; "Why dost make believe to be mad?" he demanded.

"'Cause I would live: art not answered? 'Cause I would live," replied Sigismund.

"But what means this?" cried the other. "How came your gage bloodied with gore."

"'Tis imbrued in human blood," said Sigismund, in a low and altered voice.

"I'd swear," rejoined Count Ragotzy, "the Richter had gained, and I lost, a treasure in you; but that many a year has pass'd, since this life-stream dyed the tartan."

"Now, in my eyes, it looks as fresh as yesterday," responded Sigismund, with deep pathos;—"but, prithee," presently broke from his livid lip, with wild abruptness, "prithee, hide it beneath thy gaberdine — I'm faint to see it in thy hands — it turns my very soul to its own likeness — I'm sick,—there, 'twas a ray of the moon, that struck my brain; but, now, God be praised! a cloud obscures her disk — this bonfire will better aid your debarkation. So, one stroke more. We are on terra firma, my lord." As these last words fell from his lips, the light vessel shot on the pebbly beach.

"The youth may be distraught, as 'tis given out; though, that he hath lucid intervals, is pretty evident," thought Ragotzy, as he leaped on shore. "His phantasie is after a fashion of his own, I trow, and, it is likely, is more than half pretence. Well, what the devil is't to me? and why should I, at such a time as this, flog my wits, in the vain endeavour to penetrate, respecting the reality of his madness, or his motives for deception?

I must banish these obtruding fancies, that grow upon my spirits, like a trouble; I have work on hand." Then addressing himself to Sigismund, he cried, "Thanks for your passage, follower of Iwan,—be advised and return to me — you will be welcome back to the band of Ragotzy, when your present chief shall fall by my hand."

"Assuredly we shall meet again," observed Sigismund, with careless indifference of voice.

The brigand made no reply, and Sigismund silently motioned him to depart. After remaining for more than a minute resting on his oars, our hero suddenly started to his feet, and his eyes strained after the form of the count, as it receded, like a shadow, in the pale and doubtful moonlight. "I must discover, what brings him from over the water," said the youth, in a low indrawn voice. "I risk much, though Walter may not arrive, ere I get back; but, whether or no, I must e'en follow in the trail of the serpent." Intent on this object, Sigismund drew the light fabric into a little creek, among a tall growth of flags and reeds, and there attached it by a rope, to an amphibious branch of weeping ash, which, mostly stripped of its leaves, lay half afloat upon the water —

> "Ever and anon,
> When the slow lazy breeze came muttering by,
> The frail stems bowed, and dipped their long bright leaves,
> Like hair below the water." *

Balancing his axen staff lightly in his hand, our hero left the soft light of the moon, to pursue, slowly, and with caution, the gloomy and half-worn path, so narrow as to be almost imperceptible, which had been followed by the Cygani leader. After traversing the woods for the better part of an hour, his course led, by a devious and tangled descent of close underwood, into a lonely glen, where the waving shadows of long rank grasses swept

* Montezuma.

sullenly over a broad sheet of stagnant bog, feebly irradiated by the pale moon, that gleamed, and trembled on its quaking waters. Near the edge of this swamp, might be discerned, a large oak tree, blasted, and of extraordinary magnitude. Not far from thence, stood a single low hut, raised partly of stone, piles of which were lying around the whole exterior,—but it was chiefly constructed of the grouted fragments of a conventual building, situated little more than a hundred yards higher up, and which, however dilapidated, retained sufficient proof of the ancient magnificence of the structure. These ruinous materials were irregularly put together, and exhibited but small evidence of masonic skill. It was thither, making, however, a considerable detour, that Count Ragotzy held on his course.

Lonely was the spot; breathing and deep, the silence, in which it slept. The melancholy, gaunt, cold aspect of the dilapidated structure, where the hallowing light sharpened, to a more fine and etherial radiance, the wrought edges and tracery of the time-worn pediments and friezes; the low-eaved hovel, beyond which the immemorial trees rose, apparently into the heavens; the black, close, huge, woods, environing the morass, and waving their implicated boughs, in harmony with the wind, as it swept their depths, and sighed among their precarious foliage, conspired to impress the mind of Sigismund with a feeling of deep solitude; while the desolate rustling of the withered leaves under-foot, and the absence of all appearance of animation, save that of the spectral form of Ragotzy, side by side with his tall shadow, like an aerial companion, gliding along the little woodpath to his appointment, were calculated still more to deepen such a sensation. It was so far favourable to our hero's object, that the daring man, on whose track he ventured, traced the mazes of his intricate course, without reverting his head; for frequently he diverged from the dwarf copses, composed of pale green oak, of

withered beach, and of other infant tenants of the forest, into the broad moonlight, and the blind and tangled thickets, through which, Sigismund sought his way, though they did not wholly expose his person, would hardly have hidden him from the brigand's sight, had he chanced to look behind, in the direction of his pursuer.

At length Count Ragotzy reached the ruinous hut, and stood in the door-way. He turned, and sent his eye abroad, suffering the dark orb to rest for a moment, abstractedly, on a scene, which the ghostly colouring of the still gelid moon,* mingling with the sickly light of midnight, only rendered more dispiriting, and more desolate. The site of this sequestered spot,—the dark pool,—the deserted hut,—the eddying of the withered foliage, which broke the death-like stillness of the vast forest,—the *horror umbrarum* on every side, had something in them, impressive and awful to the imagination. Whether outward objects, or the remembrances they suggested, weaved the thick gathering clouds, which at that lonely hour, dulled the mental light of the Cygani, we cannot tell,—from whatever cause, he felt an unwonted depression darkening his mind, like the shadow of a coming evil. Striving to shake off the gloomy presentiment, he peered into the dark waveless waters of that solitary pool, whose depths had all the character of a submarine firmament. The limpid fount was spangled with mimic stars, and mirrored the moon, as she sailed along in her placid beauty. Ragotzy gazed long and thoughtfully, till the planet seemed to grow on his sight, and her broad disk bore the semblance of a human countenance,—he looked hard on the visage, with that sort of creative spell, made up of incredulity and fancy, and he could gradually trace all its lineaments, till at last, to his consternation, he recognised in the face, a likeness of himself. Appalled by his own gloomy imagination, he raised his eyes from

* "Gelida Luna."—Boethius.

the mocking vision, to the moon in heaven, as if to certify himself of the fact, or dispel the illusion. Even as the rays from above fell directly on his dark fiery eyes, he obtained a transient view of a moving form, which a peculiarly bright glimpse of moonlight now showed him, a short way off, gliding among the shadows of a group of copse-oakwood. "'Tis either the graf Maylat or the graf Balassi," he thought to himself, as without stopping to gaze further at the planet, or her terrible reflection in the sedgy quagmire, he passed beneath the low portal of the hut. He had scarcely measured three steps in the pitchy darkness, when he felt something brush, with a rustling sound, rapidly by him,—he started, and conceived, he saw the shadowy outline of a human figure, flitting between him and the open postern, the vision had already disappeared in the obscurity of the chamber, before the brigand recovered from his amazement.

"So, my lord," he exclaimed, "you are true to your appointment." No answer was returned.—"Speak, I conjure thee, my Lord Balassi. Is not thine, that form I see." The echo of his voice made the only reply;—"if not, who art thou?" continued the count. "Answer me, or take the consequence." Ragotzy loosened his Hebrew vestments, and drew his sword. "Now mind me, whatever thou art called, only hold this unseemly silence another second, and I make you mute for ever." The threat failed to elicit a response, and the brigand rushed fiercely upon the figure, that seemed to stand out to his orb of sight, in the extremity of the room. The bright steel flashed before his eyes, as he raised it to cleave, what he believed to be the person of a human being: he caught no sound of motion, but the appearance seemed to glide away, as Ragotzy struck at it, with such effect, that, lighting on the rough stone-work of the apartment, the blade of his weapon was shivered to pieces. The unexpected shock made the brigand recoil several steps, while the faint outline traced on the wall, melted into

the rude masonry, which, on looking more attentively, he became more capable of distinguishing, by means of a broken lattice on the adjacent side of the chamber. The low structure, which he now tenanted, had been erected many years since, by the Cygani leader, that he might hold unreserved communication with the magnats and chiefs, who sought his services, and required the aid of his daring band, to bring to issue any of those death-feuds, which were of such common occurrence, at the period of our story. The hovel had been inhabited only for a few days, on some rare occasion; and, as a consequence, had gradually fallen to decay. Indeed, considering the sequestered situation of the rude hut, it is probable, that few, excepting Ragotzy, and certain of his followers, were aware of its existence. The brigand knew not what to conclude. It might certainly have been merely a shade, which he had so incautiously aimed at; but, that sufficed to prove, that the ruinous precints contained within their boundary, some individual besides himself. That he had not tilted with his own shadow, was evident, from the fact of his not having crossed the space, where the faint light of dewy midnight fell ghastfully through the interstice, upon the grey stone wall,—but then, some opaque body or other, must have obscured the feeble cold gleam, if he would not ascribe the appearance, he was certain he had witnessed, to a supernatural cause. Count Ragotzy, as we have had occasion to remark, was possessed of as daring and determined a temper as any gentleman in his line, from Nimrod down to Rob Roy; but his courage was supported by a wary discretion, which saved it from degenerating into rashness. How the reader would have acted in his case, we will not presume to say; for ourselves, we might have done as Henry Pelham, in the Rue St. Honoré, and screamed out for help.* Count Ra-

* See Pelham, vol. 1. page 64.

gotzy walked forth into the air. There the moon-light softly slept on the quiet ground, crossed by the shadowy erection, he had just quitted. At that instant, the graf Maylat, arrived at the place of rendezvous.

"Is, my lord, your friend sick?" demanded Ragotzy, after the first greetings were interchanged; "that I see you alone?"

"At heart, I fear me, before this time," replied Maylat, in the cadence best suited to alarming tidings. He was proceeding to recount that adventure of the evening, which it was our task in the last manuscript to record; when his fearful associate interposed, by a gentle pressure on the arm. Maylat turned his eye upward, to read in the brigand's visage, the meaning of his interruption; and then Ragotzy, dropping his voice to a whisper, acquainted him, with his suspicion of some eaves-dropper, being even then within the hut.

"That we will soon ascertain," replied Maylat, speaking also beneath his breath; "and now applaud my forethought," and the young graf drew forth a small lamp from under his cloak; "I bethink me of certain flints ready at hand, near your tenement, with which to strike a light, when, always barring the devil and Father Dominick, we two need not much care, what manner of folk they may be, whom we will eject from their snug location." In saying these words, Count Maylat moved a few steps along the line of the building, and quickly illumined the lamp he had provided. Both then passed into the ruinous demense, and looked cautiously around them. It contained a single room, whose dimensions accorded with the design of the erection, to occasionally accommodate, or rather contain, a number of inmates. The apartment possessed an immense chimney-place, still glowing with the warmth of dying embers, near which there was extended a rude bench, and a heap of dried *krumholz*. The light, shed, by the lamp of Maylat,

gave to view nought human, save his own martial figure, and that of his confederate, clad in the Israelitish garb.

"Your fancy must have bodied out that form, you spake of, and have played false with the materials of judgment," observed Maylat.

"It may be so," said Ragotzy, with a due affectation of indifference. Since, however, internally convinced that his imagination had no hand in the apparition, he had beheld, he yet felt it was not his part to moot a discussion on such a point. "It may be so; but what has become of my Lord Balassi?"

Maylat recounted the circumstances, which led to his detention.

"This is ill-timed," said Ragotzy, when the other had concluded; "we must not think of trusting to any aid, from the graf's men-at-arms; his followers will be looked to, and yourself, I fear, will be suspected,—but where's this missive you mentioned?" The paper of Dr. Stancari was produced, and speedily burst open.

"Damnation!" cried Ragotzy, the instant his eagle eye took in the purport of the writing: "'Tis from Quendi-Ferens! Martinuzzi has stolen a march on us."

"Yes, dolt! I might have guessed it. If the Turkish army, headed by Achamates, be not planted in the rear of Piadena! Half the Hungarian force has crossed the Samos! Before dawn, the drowsy Austrians will be cut off; so, good-bye to his excellency, Baptista Castaldo. And for you and I, my lord, we may close the map as soon as we will, and to *vesper brod*,* an' any digestion be left us to sup withal.—There, read, read."

The epistle of Quendi Ferens briefly stated, that in endeavouring to lead his division across the *digues des etangs*, beyond Coloswar, he had been entangled among the water-courses of the valley, where every step only

* Vesper brod: supper.

plunged him into new difficulties;—he had been obliged to order his cavalry to dismount and lead their horses back, amid plashes of mire and water, where, often, there was scarcely a foothold. He had, at length, however, nearly unravelled the mazes of the strath, but owing to what had happened, did not expect to bring his troops into action, so early, by some hours, as had been concerted. In conclusion, he mentioned, that he had that instant transmitted a courier to the Ottoman camp, to apprise Achamates of his having crossed the Samos.

"'Tis most extraordinary, the Castellans were not apprised of the position of Achamates, and of this movement of Quendi Ferens, when you left Coloswar," said Maylat, after glancing his eye over the paper.

"The regent has not hitherto opened a free communication with the city," answered Ragotzy; "or he may suspect the faith of Mircé,—there's no knowing. A sortie was to be made by Raoul, at a signal agreed upon; but Mircé did not anticipate its occurring before midday to-morrow."

"Surely," said Maylat, "there never was a surprise more complete than this. Piadena will be annihilated, and Mircé's fine project of holding out the city of Coloswar, against the Castellan Raoul, on his return, must be abandoned, since it would be madness in him to defy the arms of Martinuzzi, just flushed with victory. Moreover, your making the regent prisoner, must be deferred; for the slightest movement to that end, would bring the whole Turkish army down upon us. This man becalms the land; his golden feathers stretch like sails above us, and when we stir, we flag." He paused, and after a minute's thought, subjoined; "Suppose, after all, we trust the Marquis of Piadena?"

"We might, perhaps, rescue *him* from the jaws of destruction," returned Ragotzy, coldly; "but I cannot see, wherein we shall be benefited."

"Nay, my noble leader," said Maylat, "when the

Austrian general finds the power of the magnates of Hungary, is as great as their will, to support the Lady Czerina, on her throne, we may, probably, be able to dictate our own terms to the Italian;—more especially in the strait, to which he will find himself reduced."

"The Lady Czerina!" muttered the Cygani scornfully, between his teeth; and then, in a more audible voice, he proceeded; "What magnates mean you? Do you style me such?"—and haughty was the smile of the bandit. "*Your* powers will, probably, be held in check. The Count Balassi is already, according to your account, a prisoner, or worse. What magnates mean you?"

"Nine-tenths of the independent barons of the realm," replied Maylat, with animation. "Only hold out to them a vista of hope, of foiling the usurper, in his ambition, and, by the rood of St. Stephen! the deeply sworn purpose, which lies at the core of every patriot, who still owns the throb of life, will be avowed, in the face of Hungary. The will of Martinuzzi is submitted to, because, as men are led to think, there remains no other chance of averting, from the country, the horrors of a foreign yoke. Let us then point out, to their mental vision, the day-spring from on high, by making common league with Piadena, on condition of his aiding our loyal emprize. His preservation must be made contingent, to his promising his offices, at the coronation of the Lady Czerina, immediately after the capture, or death, of her tyrannical guardian.

Count Ragotzy did not, at first, reply. He revolved over in his mind, for a minute or two, the various chances, complicated in the line of policy, recommended by Maylat. He felt convinced, that if the *Seraskier** chose to act, an event, however, (although he did not care to state as much) of which he entertained some doubt, all warning to Piadena, must arrive too late; and that nothing,

* Turkish general.

but an express miracle, in that general's favour, could save his army from the most complete discomfiture. In such a case, the disaffected nobles, by their treasonable "complicity," with a foreign and vanquished enemy, would only have sealed their own condemnation, whether at the hands of Martinuzzi, or Achamates, without advancing a single step, the cause of the injured lady, in defence of whose rights, they sacrificed themselves. Ragotzy had his private grounds for believing, that the worst disservice, that could happen to the Lady Czerina, would be the success of that very measure, her zealous champions were conspiring; namely, the removal of the cardinal, her guardian, from the helm of government. He saw, moreover, that the amission of the directing mind of Martinuzzi, at that particular crisis, must plunge all things into such a state of confusion, as would not fail to afford an opening to the ambition of Achamates: and that, after the defeat of Piadena, the absence of the regent would seem to incline the long nicely-balanced scale, in favour of the Ottoman domination.

Such was the ruinous condition of affairs, which Maylat's proposition, if reduced to action, appeared likely to produce. The putting of Austria, as it were, *hors de combat;* — the utter destruction of the conspiring magnates themselves, at the hands of the Turk, and, thereby, a fatal blow struck at the corporate power, and privileges, of the native aristocracy;— the ascendancy of Turkish influence, in the councils of the country, or, more probably, the incorporation of Transylvania, with the vast empire of Solyman. On the other hand, Ragotzy reflected, that the important victory, he appeared on the eve of obtaining, would fix Martinuzzi more firmly than ever on his seat, and that the chapter of accidents, might not, speedily, present such another opportunity of securing his person. The Cygani leader perceived plainly, that the affair must implicate the lives of Maylat and the confederated chiefs, without

a particle of commensurate advantage, accruing to the Lady Czerina.

"But what matters that to me?" argued the wily adventurer, with himself: "their bane must prove my mithridate. The weakness of Czerina, the failure of her partizans, constitute my strength. My interest, like that of the Corinthian of old, is to have these taller ears struck down.* The personal freedom, and absolute will of Martinuzzi, are insuperable impediments to the Lady Veronica,—my wife, that shall be, obtaining her rightful inheritance. A dungeon *may* bring the arrogant prelate, to reason,— and he *may* capitulate to my terms; or I *may* succeed, in coming to some agreement with Solyman. Veronica's claims, merely require an impartial hearing, for which the removal of Martinuzzi makes way. But, at the worst, I shall have only caged the lion, not speared him; and, at any time, I can strike up a sort of compromise with the regent, and let him loose upon the country, when his very roar will disperse all foreign enemies, and privy conspirators, and set the land to rights again."

The above train of thought, has required of us not a few lines to elucidate; but, in a much shorter space of time, than the reader will have consumed in their perusal, the mind of Ragotzy leaped, as it were, the argumental process, and determined in what mode, he had best adapt his policy to circumstances.

"Why, methinks, upon reflection, my lord," said the brigand, resuming the discourse, "that there appears some likelihood, in what thou proposest; and, I am free to confess, I do not see, as matters stand, any other

* The enigmatical reply of Tarquin, to his son Sextus, is well known. Compare Livy, b. i. c. 54. with the fifth book of Herodotus, where, (substituting *ασταχυων* for *papaverum*) Periander and Thrasybulus, anticipate the proceeding of the Roman princes, most circumstantially. The coincidence, however remarkable, may perhaps be accounted for, by remembering, that the Tarquins were of a Corinthian race.

game that is left us to play. I only discover one little difficulty, which, pressed as we are for time, I take to be somewhat formidable."

"I see none whatever," said Maylat; "point out that, which seems such to thy microscopic vision."

"Why nothing less," answered Ragotzy, "than how Piadena is to be gently wakened, by our communication, instead of being aroused, by the rude clamour of Quendi Ferens."

"Wont *you* undertake the commission?" asked Maylat, somewhat brusquely.

"Not quite so fast, my good lord," replied Ragotzy: "I shall have enough to do, to get my little band into battle-array, betimes. The lads are wont to repose soundly, whenever sleep is allowable, and I scarcely anticipated, having any such desperate work to put them to, before to-morrow eve, at the earliest. They will be hard to waken."

"*So hard, that no earthly power can accomplish it,*" exclaimed some person, apparently close beside the brigand.

Ragotzy laid his hand upon a sort of short carabine, which was the only weapon of offence, which remained to him, and directed his eyes around, but beheld nobody. Count Maylat, meantime, raised the lamp from the bench, and introduced its doubtful light, into the far gloom of the chamber. There was, evidently, no other person in the room, and yet they agreed the voice sounded contiguous. Suddenly, a thought seemed to strike the Cygani leader, who, sallying out of the hut, made directly towards that broken gap in the wall, which, though dilapitated, by the wear and tear of the elements, had been, probably, designedly left, as an interstice for a window.

On turning an angle of the building, Ragotzy descried a human figure, about the distance of a bow-shot off, retreating precipitately, towards the dark covert of the

wood. Internally persuaded, that it must have been the shadow of that flying form, which, previous to Maylat's arrival, had occasioned him some inquietude , besides having been the cause of shivering his good sword to pieces, and entertaining, likewise, a well-grounded suspicion, that his interview, with the graf, had been witnessed, by the same prying individual, his immediate impulse was to level his carabine, at the fugitive; but a moment's consideration, suggesting the possibility of missing his aim, he determined to reserve his fire, till he had either overtaken him, or, at least, so diminished the distance, as to be tolerably sure of bringing him down.

As well as the shifting beams of the moon, that now shimmered, with a faint light, over the sylvan scene, enabled him to distinguish, the person, in whose wake he followed, with such haste, was dressed in the ordinary garb, and armed with the ordinary implements of the herdsman of the forest; but it became a matter of no small marvel to Ragotzy, after a chase of several minutes, along the winding path which skirted the wood, that he did not appear, sensibly, to gain ground, on the object of his pursuit. While he was yet, with unabated vigour, following up his game, or, more correctly speaking, straining every nerve, to exceed the rate at which the herdsman ran, he was suddenly struck, with surprise, by the outline of the figure, on which he kept his eye, becoming confounded amid a dark, living mass, composed of men-at-arms, into whose hands, an abrupt turning of the narrow wood-path, along which he directed his flight, appeared to have delivered him a prisoner. Ragotzy instantly slackened his pace, and partly guessing how matters stood, lost no time in ensconcing himself, in the rear of certain huge trunks of trees, the group of which, constituted a sort of advanced post of the interminable forest. In a minute, the whole body came up, at a rapid pace, and he heard their heavy tramp, within a few yards of the spot where he lurked. Notwithstanding his cri-

tical situation, he could not resist casting one look on the martial array, and, noiselessly shifting his position, he glanced his eye over the small corps, as they defiled, only two a-breast, before his sight. They wore the colours of Hungary; and, therefore, acknowledged the authority of the regent. More than half the troop had, already, passed forward; but, at the command of a tall cavalier, who spake as one having authority, some half-dozen made a halt, at that instant, close to Ragotzy. This person was girt in a suit of black armour, of the simplest form, and his vizor was down.

"It was even here, or I much mistake," said he, "that our eye lost sight of him, whose pursuit hurried yon cattle-keeper, so blindly on our trail. Bring forward the prisoner."

The features of the speaker were, of course, hidden behind the vizor; but the voice was one, with which Ragotzy had been too long familiar, not immediately to recognise.

"Doubly-damned traitor!" he muttered between his clenched teeth; "So thou wouldst buy the pardon of thy past life, by conducting the myrmidons of the regent, to the haunts of thy sworn commander? It is well;—it is excellent;—thou wouldst betray the Bandit Polgar, wouldst thou? but he will at once wipe out old scores, and, in this very hour, which consummates thy treachery, thou shalt be made the victim of his retribution."

Saying, or rather thinking thus, Ragotzy grasped his piece more firmly, and levelled it at the vizored cavalier. He held back for a moment, however, for, in the cattle-keeper, who was now brought forward, guarded between two armed men, he was perfectly perplexed to discover the wild young noble, who had ferried him over the Samos.

Meantime, the commander spoke. "I would ask again, what cause, young man, induced you to fly with

such precipitation, and say, was it not hereabouts, your comrade, or foeman, whichever he was, made off into the wood ?"

" I repeat," said Sigismund, " my demand, as you would answer for your conduct to the regent, to be, as speedily as possible, brought to ear of his eminence. I have intelligence, of no common moment, which, to be worth hearing, must be told instantly. In respect to the ruffian, from whom I fled," — he paused, and turned his head quickly on one side, adding, — " why, I have him *now* in my eye, — he lurks behind the trunk of the very tree, beneath whose branches we stand."

" Indeed !" said the commander ; " some of you rout him out, and bring him before me ; and, regarding your wish, young man, to be conveyed before the regent, you shall obtain it, when I have executed my present duty."

Sigismund betrayed no slight degree of impatience. " I tell you, sir knight," he remonstrated, " the regent will give you small thanks for not instantly heeding my request. Those, whom you are in search of, are beyond your reach. There were two of them, the one, evidently, by your men not having, ere this, brought him before you, has effected his escape ; the other will hardly wait your coming. I pledge you my honour, the regent would be more obliged to you for my tidings, than for the caption of Count Maylat."

The expostulation of Sigismund answered no purpose. " The honour of a *Kanactz !*" said the cavalier, in a contemptuous tone ; " but you named the right traitor, sure enough ; and, since you are so strangely pertinacious, and that he, whom you say you beheld, seems not likely to be speedily forthcoming, I will so far oblige you, as to delay here no longer." And, agreeably to this resolution, which Sigismund heard with deep inquietude, though patience appeared his only resource, the troop resumed their march towards the hut, and, by taking the

circuitous route, which swept along the line of the wood, they, at length, arrived at that desolate goal.

Return we to Count Ragotzy. Surprised by the sudden command, issued for his seizure, he was diverted for the time, from his object of assassination, and, for the assurance of his own freedom, betook himself to flight. The line he followed, ran coiling among the trees, so that, although at the first start, he was but a little a-head, his knowledge of the intricacies of the wood speedily enabled him to leave his pursuers, at fault, and many minutes had not elapsed, ere the Cygani leader, breathless indeed, but free and unfettered, looked forth, from under the same broad-stemmed oak, behind whose trunk he lurked, when first Sigismund detected his proximity. By the cold, clear light of the moon, he could behold the foremost rank of the little division, falling into line in front of the hut, which they had just reached. A thousand desperate passions raged in the breast of Ragotzy. The conviction thus pressed upon him, that Martinuzzi did indeed set his malice at defiance, or he would never employ, in the face of the world, a man, whom the brigand considered a creature of his own, to betray him into the toils of justice, by indicating his most secret haunt, though it stung his brain, even like madness, was not the agony that was most *objective* (if the epithet can be allowed) in the mind of Ragotzy. No; trusting, ere the moon again clomb the heavens, to be quits with his mighty enemy, he endeavoured to bid the thought of Martinuzzi's open hostility pass away for the present, or would have transferred it to the sum of bitter feelings, which rankled, in his malignant nature, at the consciousness of his revenge having been baffled. Burning, with a sort of fiendish lust after vengeance, his eyes still remained fixed on the movements of the small party of military, and he could faintly distinguish the form of the mailed cavalier, conspicuous amongst the rest from his dark plume and glancing helmet, who

appeared to have fallen back to the rear, where the disguised young count was stationed, between two men-at-arms.

There are a sort of men, whom circumstances, or their own genius, have spoiled, who, whenever their self-will conceives any possible kind of gratification, cannot rest, till, with whatever cost, and at whatever risk, they consummate their wishes. Count Ragotzy was one of these slaves to the slightest promptings of that evil principle, which, however human nature came by it, was assuredly never meant to be humoured and pampered, till, like the rod of Aaron, it swallow up every kind of antagonist motive, in its insane violence.

The sight of the commander of the party, moving to the completion of his treachery, renewed, in Ragotzy's breast, the deep desire for retribution, which he was so near gratifying. He gazed and gazed, till, in the hot inspiration of wicked passion, the spirit of the devil moved upon his blood, and he conceived the course of action, which he determined forthwith to pursue. The low structure, where Ragotzy's eyes now involuntarily rested, was situated not many paces, from the furthermost edge of that vast marshy pool, of which we before spake. The dark wall of forest, which circumscribed the natural and capacious dingle, stretched itself to a distance of several hundred yards on every side, from the stagnant waters, with the exception of that group of oak-wood, beneath which Ragotzy was planted, at which point, the forest made a sweep in the direction of the morass, and the waters of the latter stretched forth a deep, narrow arm, into the midst of the grove, as if to return the courtesy.

> " Within that melancholy grove
> The tardy deep and sullen current rolls
> Unwillingly : Thou might'st have sat upon
> Its banks, and seen its glassy face made black,
> By tall pines, which lean over it and talk,
> And trees that weep into its stream ; no secret

> Beneath that solitary water's wave
> Can the bright eye discern ; — the lights in Heaven
> See not what's done under the strict embrace
> Of those protecting boughs." *

Ragotzy's determination was, if possible, to regain the like favourable opportunity for snatching at revenge, which accident had momentarily afforded, but which he had weakly neglected turning to account. For that purpose, he would have awaited his victim where he then was, only he remembered, there was a more direct path leading from the hut to the regent's camp, which, it was not improbable, the party would pursue on their return. To reach the building, by the course the little detachment had followed, it would be necessary to make a long circuit, which would, probably, lead to the discovery of his approach, and, of course, defeat his best chance of succeeding in his sanguinary design. The third mode, which presented itself to his fertile brain, was to proceed, in a line proper to an arrow or a huntsman, and which might remind the punning reader of the petticoats of a Parisian grisette, being, in fact, *the shortest cut possible*. This implied the necessity of crossing the deep morass, which, while it led him directly to his purpose, Ragotzy hoped would favour his stealing unobserved, within gunshot of the hated cavalier. With this intent, he descended into the water, keeping as near as possible to the edge, where the tranquil pool was overgrown with long, rank grasses, that, in a great measure, concealed his form as he crept along. As the water varied abruptly in depth, sometimes scarce reaching unto his knees, and then again suddenly covering his shoulders, the chief difficulty which presented itself to Ragotzy, in wading through the swamp, was the having constantly to hold his fire-arms above the level of the waters, under shelter of the sedge and rushes.

* Montezuma.

Having, at length, ensconced himself in the capacious hollow of that broad-breasted tree, we formerly described, he next applied his orb of vision to a slight fissure in the bark, to ascertain the state of things in the vicinity of the hovel. He immediately gathered, from the confusion and bustle about the threshold, that some interesting matter (though he could not discover what) was transacting within. "Surely," thought Ragotzy, "Count Maylat can scarce have been so infatuated, as to await the coming of his captors."

The next instant a scream rent the air, the men-at-arms drew back on either side the portal, and the commander issued forth, carrying in his arms, the lifeless form of a young female. "Stand off, every one of ye!" he exclaimed, in a loud, agitated tone of voice, "nor follow me." Almost at the word, having, with rapid strides, cleared the space of ground between the hut and the dark pool, he halted, within a spear's length of the withered oak; then, half kneeling on the brink of the water, he supported the pale inanimate on his knee and arm, whilst he splashed her neck and brow with the vivificative liquid, that he scooped up in his open palm. The two figures were thus disposed, beneath the serene and star-lit heavens, that broadened round them, and were defined to Ragotzy's eye, with a vivid but ghostly effect, in the solemnizing light of the hour.

A second time was the brigand, on the eve of sacrificing the vizored knight to his vengeance, but even as he lowered the muzzle of his carabine, his consternation, (for the state of his mind can be adequately expressed by no weaker term,) so overcame him, as to paralyze for a moment his power of action; but his purpose was only suspended, not abandoned. That exquisite form, set off by the dark robe, that fitted so accurately to the contour of its "winding lineaments,"—that marbly countenance, which no Parian stone, however it might emulate its whiteness, was ever taught to rival, in the immaterial and

diviner quality of expression—those long tresses of molten gold, which went streaming over her shoulders, and which "might seem to a fanciful view" to be busied embarrassing the stray beams from above, in their abundant tangles—if the encountering these well-known points of feminine loveliness, suddenly presented to his view, startled the brigand for an instant, it was owing to the extremity of his surprise, at falling in with their insensible possessor, at liberty, and under such peculiar circumstances, at the very time, he had reason to believe her personal freedom to be under circumscription, nearly a league from the spot.

Ragotzy shortly recovered his self-command, and fearing any longer to procrastinate, and urged to the diabolical deed, from motives, to which a concurrence of circumstances had just lent a frightful access of force, he took a leisurely and deliberate aim, at the object of his wrath, and fired. The mailed knight staggered, and was sinking, wounded to the earth, when the assassin, who had darted forwards, snatched from his relaxed hold the light form of the half-conscious being, he had hitherto borne on his arm, and with a voice, whose dreadful accents sounded on the strings of the other's very heart, piercing the wretched man with keener agony, than did the bullet in his side, muttered—"*Remember the bridge of the Vienne!*"

Vicchy, for it was even he, would have spoken—he would have struggled,—to no purpose; the next instant, even ere several of the men-at-arms had rushed to his assistance, Count Ragotzy was seen with his lovely prize, darting along in the direction of the wood, with the desperate speed of one of its native denizens, when he hies to his hidden retreat, holding the evidence of his ravages in his fangs. The wounded man, as he pointed to the receding form of the human tiger, sunk, with a deep moan, senseless on the earth. Count Ragotzy, meanwhile, moved swiftly in a straight line, towards the trackless cover

of the forest, trusting, if he could only gain its dark shade, to set his pursuers at defiance. Till he arrived on the very verge of the lofty line of ash, beech, hazel, and other forest trees, which skirted the dingle, he refrained from looking behind him; there, however, he paused, and ascertained, with his own eyes, that out of nearly a score of men, who had originally instituted a pursuit, not above half a dozen had followed it up. Of these, however, three were directly at his heels. With a fresh impulse, he resumed his flight at full speed, bearing his lovely burden under his left arm, as if he felt not her weight. As he attained the narrow opening into a depth of thicket, impervious to the rays of moon and stars, one of his hunters pressed so close on him, that he heard his loud panting in his very ear, and even almost fancied he could feel his gasping breath, warm on his bare neck. Not willing to incur the risk of any one discovering the path, he meant to follow, he warily suffered the man to approach as near, as within arm's length, when, abruptly stopping short, he swung his carabine round with such force, as he wheeled suddenly about, that the butt-end, lighting on his pursuer's head, struck him to the earth. Again Ragotzy pushed forward, and shoving aside the branches of the exuberant shoots, which nearly covered the soil, he soon rested beneath the shade of implicated leaves, in all the confidence of security. Gently unclasping his arm from about his beauteous spoil, he placed her beside him, upon a seat opportunely afforded, by the felled arm of some centuried Titan of the forest. In the meantime, the lovely girl was fast recovering her animation, and consciousness, and her returning sensation was first indicated by convulsive sobs. Happening to feebly raise her head, from the broad breast on which it leant, her eyes fell on the person of her supporter. For a moment, she did not recollect him, but the next instant, a short cry of alarm broke from her lips. Her very flesh seemed to her creeping with horror, and it was with difficulty,

she avoided again going off into a swoon, at thus finding herself, in such close proximity to the detested brigand.

"Was it all deception?" she exclaimed, half audibly, starting from the blood-curdling contact. "Great God! I deluded myself, that I had found my father, and lo! I look around me, and even thou, from whose strong hold I had flattered myself, I had escaped for ever, sittest, in horrible reality, by my side! It can't be true—I dream, sure. I'll hide me in the recesses of the wood, till I awake."

Saying these words, the fair speaker rose, and made an effort to escape; but Count Ragotzy, as she turned away, laid his hand firmly on her wrist, and with gentle violence induced her to be re-seated.

"Dearest Lady Veronica," he said, "agitate not thyself to thine own mind's injury; there can no harm reach thee, when he is present, who, within these four-and-twenty hours, purposeth to secure a legal claim to thy possession, beyond the reach of fate itself to annul, by making thee his own, his wedded bride—his countess."

Veronica breathed short and quick. "Thy wedded bride, murderer!" she answered indignantly; "rather the bride of death!" With these words, she closed her eyes, and turned aside.

"Nay, my Veronica, thou wert too rare a tribute to offer up at the dark shrine of the skeleton divinity; but I love thy spirit, and will mate with thee, after the only mode one of thy proud temper should be wived;" and he bent his sinister glances on her shrinking countenance, till her eyes sunk with shame, beneath their shocking expression. "Thou art a lioness," continued the brigand, "by right and attribute; and, by my sword! I'll woo thee, lady, as the king of the forest prevails in his tender suit."

"Thou presume to compare thyself to that royal beast, who hast not a solitary noble quality in thy nature!—

thou! with whom the very earth groans in abhorrence!" answered Veronica, in an ungovernable burst of indignation. "Why hast thou stolen me from my peaceful home? Why held me in captivity? And why, having effected my escape, under the auspices of the bravest of men, darest thou again commit this wanton outrage on my liberty? Why dost thou detain me now?"

"Wilt thou deign, Lady Veronica, to explain," said Ragotzy, in that low, serious tone, which bespoke him deeply solicitous respecting the nature of the response; at the same time casting an oblique glance of mingled ferocity and admiration upon the damsel, "whom thou art pleased to honour, by the style of the bravest of men?"

A slight tinge of added colour flitted across the cheek of the undaunted girl, as she replied, "One whom thou wilt know, to thy cost, sooner than thou deemest; and one, who hath for years vowed to Heaven to rid earth of a monster."

Ragotzy bit his lip, to suppress his irritated feelings, as he made answer—"Since his interest or fears have kept him so long forsworn, it is to be hoped your champion, like a perjured braggart, will yet kiss the vile clay from which his spirit sprang; at least, my best endeavours shall not be wanting to that end; for, understand, Lady Veronica, I shall institute the strictest scrutiny, as to the manner of your strange elopement."

Veronica smiled scornfully, but returned no answer.

There followed a long deep pause, broken by the clanging toll of the abbey bell of Coloswar, which swung far over the moon-lit woodland, and, dying faintly away into a kind of booming echo, vibrated, sweet and melancholy, for several seconds, in the vault of distance.

Then Ragotzy arose, and spoke:—"Lady," he said, "I would gladly allow you further rest, did circumstances admit of it; but never, since the hour when St. Stephen annexed Transylvania to the crown of Hungary,*

* A. D. 1030. M. Sigleri Chron. Rer. Hung. lib. i.

was any *ido** more pregnant with mighty occurrents, than the moment of time, on which we hover. Even now, the sensible wind doth catch the signal, and, like a sudden wave, heaves onward at each slow alarum; and the music of day is pealing in the east: but, lady, ere light and life are quickened anew, many a tongue, that now wags freely, will be laid low, and, if I err not, the allegiance of this kingdom will be bound, hand and foot, to thy lover's chariot wheel, to be by him handed over, where alone it is due, to the lovely grandchild of Baron Walstein."

Veronica was painfully astonished, and visibly turned pale. The Cygani's equivocal prophecy in her childhood, coupled with the strange fact of her father having, ever since indulged, in what she was wont to consider visionary anticipations of its fulfilment, crossed her mind. The full coherence of its opposite significations struck her. Turning her head aside, she covered her eyes with her hand. "Good God!" she communed with herself, "is it possible, the augury, which promised so splendidly, should have such a fatal meaning, and yet prove true?"

The abstracted damsel had no time to dwell longer on the melancholy retrospect, and more melancholy prospect of the future, for Ragotzy, by intimating with a graceful reverence his desire, that they should proceed, aroused her from her mood of reflection, to a painful sense of the more real and pressing peril of the hour. After quaffing a draught, at a clear spring, which gushed o'er the verdant hillock near where she sat, Veronica quiescently prepared to "o'er-trip the dew," in company with the brigand, rather than feel herself forcibly enveloped in his hated arms, a consequent which she knew would follow her slightest manifestation of reluctance, in obeying his will. Silently and rapidly, therefore, the sullen pair—Count Ragotzy, like a man whose thoughts were abstracted from

* Ido—epoch.

the scene around him, and his fair captive, lost in melancholy reflections — traversed, for some time, the labyrinthian fastnesses of the forest, when their ears caught faintly the gurgling ripple of the neighbouring river, as it murmured in the stillness of the moonlight calm, and spent its tiny waves, with lulling measure, on the pebbly shore. Suddenly they reached a turn in the tangled path, which gave them to behold the river, glistening beneath them, and shining, far as the eye could reach, like a long rim of silver, athwart the verdant vale. At a little distance, on the further side of the stream, the venerable Abbey of Coloswar lay in the view; while, in its vicinage, half wrapped in mist, and half basking in the mellow light of the starry hour, might be defined the turrets of the city, washed and girdled by a branch of the divided Samos. Just as they were on the point of descending the broken, and scarce visible thoroughfare, by which alone, a sort of bridge, (if three loose planks which arched the water where the river became narrow, might be termed such,) was accessible, they were startled by the apparition of one, whom of all men they least expected to encounter. This was no other than our friend Sigismund, who, abruptly breaking his way, through the leaves and branches of a neighbouring thicket, planted himself right in the path of the brigand, and his fair captive, as if disposed to dispute their passage. The colour danced glowingly on the cheek of Veronica, at beholding our hero, and, with a slight ejaculation of joy, she would have rushed forward to claim his protection, but Ragotzy almost rudely held back the agitated girl, and thrust her behind him.

"What, ho! my agile cattle-keeper," exclaimed the Cygani, tauntingly, at the same time dropping the breech of his carabine to the earth, "you have passed your apprenticeship to some purpose in these woods, and can thread their mazes with no small adroitness. I am not the first Hebrew, by half a score, I warrant me, whom,

young as thou art, thou hast knocked on the head with thy terrible axe, my merry forester; thou knowest a trick of thy craft."

"Thou speakest sooth, sir gipsy," replied Sigismund, in the like tone, looking Ragotzy firmly in the eye. "I know the huntsman finesse of entrapping a fox, by keeping a look-out at his old earth, but this is no time for talking. I demand that lady at your hands, when you may go your ways, for the present, in peace; at least, in such peace, as your own reflections will admit of."

"Dost thou deem thou hast a real Jew to deal with, sir wild-cat of the woods, that thou speakest so heroically? or wouldst thou have me cudgel thy folly, which somewhat exceedeth, since what time thou hast given thy keeper the slip?"

"Count Polgar," said Sigismund, or by whatever other name it pleaseth thee to be distinguished, "the hour of reckoning between thee and me is nearer, than thou dreamest, and the balance may be heavier against thee, than perchance thou wottest of; but at this moment, for the sake of the fair being, whom thou hast so inhumanly abducted from her friends, I confess, I would willingly forego arbitrating our quarrel. Surrender the lady, therefore, and again I say, thou may'st go thy ways, in such peace, as is proper to thy nature."

"And were I prepared to do thy behest herein, most sane of knight errants! with what conscience canst thou put forth a claim to the protection of the lady? Thou art scarcely her natural guardian,—and so equivocal a young gentleman were no safe, or proper companion for her modesty, in the lonely recesses of the wood. Go *thy* ways, then, in such peace, as thy unruly malady will permit."

"I will deign exchange no further terms with thee, leader of vagrants, or, what does better speak thee, *murderer!*" said Sigismund:—"One word to the lady Veronica," and immediately addressing the maid, he conjured her to inform him, whether it was her will to proceed with

the Cygani? assuring her of his protection, in case she preferred returning to her father, whom the villain had left severely wounded.

Veronica cast upon the speaker those twin stars, set in azure, that rivalled the soft hue of the sky—"Oh! save me, save me, from that homicide, by conveying me to my father's arms!" she exclaimed.

A voice from Heaven, could hardly have made a *stronger* impression upon Sigismund, than did this thrilling entreaty of the trembling girl. "Enough," he cried, advancing with his axe uplifted, in threatening attitude, against Count Ragotzy.

"More than enough," returned the brigand, with an oath, which we spare the reader; and even as the imprecation issued from his lips, the report of his fire-arms resounded on the ear.

Sigismund, who well understood the character of the man, with whom he was about to contend, had kept a wary eye throughout the whole colloquy, on the least movement of the Cygani, anticipating from the first, what climax to his arguments, he most probably meditated. Even in the instant, that the pre-eminent villain, unnoticed, as he fancied by Sigismund, raised his carabine, our hero caught a glimpse of the threatening action, and light of foot, and quick of eye, dodged alertly aside, and having thus eluded his death, rushed with stern determination, on his opponent.

The conflict which followed, à la single-stick, might almost be called tremendous. The agility and address of both appeared pretty equally matched, and whatever trifling advantage of personal strength Ragotzy might, perhaps, have been entitled to claim, was fully counterbalanced, by the inferiority of his weapon, which was scarcely so manageable, as the more effective axen instrument of Sigismund: when, however, the strokes of both presently fell, with more discrimination and less frequently, as either party acquired a greater degree of

caution and respect, for the prowess of his opponent, the brigand began to assert the superiority of skill and practice, which his experienced arm might naturally be supposed to possess, over that of so raw an adversary, as Sigismund. After looking one another in the eye, for nearly a minute, the latter combatant sensibly slackened his exertions; and though, whenever Ragotzy would retire, with the object of recharging his carabine, he invariably foiled his manœuvre, by closing on the brigand, still Sigismund evited, with no little care, having to grapple with his opponent.

The "rattling of sticks" had now lasted for some time, and had all the appearance of being destined to terminate fatally for our hero; but at this crisis of danger, the further strife was interrupted, by an armed knight, who, throwing himself between the parties, and whirling his sword about him, to their imminent risk, exclaimed, in a loud commanding tone—"Hold off, sir Jew! and sir cattle-keeper, both! or, by the souls of all the saints, I'll give your heads an impetus towards the river, and leave your trunks where they stand, for the perch of carrion."

Count Ragotzy and Sigismund, raised their eyes simultaneously, and to their common amazement, discovered, that, in the ardour of their encounter, they had suffered themselves to be approached, and nearly surrounded, by a small body of military.

"Come, my hero of the axe, and you, sir Israelite!" proceeded the intruder, after a short pause, "explain your cause of quarrel. Would the Jew, after the manner of his tribe, have turned false knave, in some matter of base traffic between ye, and the *kanactz* in his heat, like Sir Brennus of yore, have cast his weapon in the scale?—or would the *kanactz*, after the manner of his disreputable class, have cast his weapon at the Jew's head, for no cause but his own villany? If so, by St. Stephen! he seems to have met with his match. Speak, thou Jew, first, and be not cowed, for though thou be'st no more than a mere

Jew, old John Banffy will see justice done thee, as certainly, as if thou wert dear to him, as his favorite charger, or his wolf-dog, corvin."

" I make no doubt of your goodness, sir knight," said Ragotzy, with an affectation of humility, " and I would crave your protection for myself and sister, to go forwards on our pilgrimage, without let or hindrance, from that son of Amalek, who would despoil me of kindred, even the damsel I spoke of, and rifle that jewel which is the maiden's boast, and which, if it be genuine, is of vast price, not to say rarity, in these latter days; but verily I have stretched forth a strong arm in her defence, being vowed to perish for her sake; and even to that extremity may the Lord deal with me, and worse also, if my words be not the words of verity and truth"—and making a most profound reverence, the pretended Jew awaited the reply of the knight.

" If thou canst make appear what thou sayest, sir Hebrew," replied Banffy, " I'll have the rascally cattle-keeper soundly flogged, within these five minutes, for an example to his lawless generation. But how is thy lack of evidence, in proof of thy account, to be explained? Thy sister hath either only existed in thine own imagination, or else hath given ye the slip, holding, belike, Jew and Gentile in equal esteem."

" Oh, sir knight!" exclaimed Veronica, with a flush on her cheek, and a beating heart, making her way through the bushes, whither she had fled, on the approach of Banffy's troop—" That bad man is no connection of mine! it is he would bear me away with him to imprisonment, and worse than death. The count,—I mean the cattle-keeper,—is commissioned to conduct me to my father; his opponent hath no just authority over me, and is no Jew, sir knight, but a Cygani, and a captain of a horde of brigands."

" The damsel raveth," cried Ragotzy.

" We will try that, when we have more leisure," returned Banffy; and then he added, in a commanding

tone, " Make all three prisoners; and march, with them, forwards. By Heavens! ere this we should have crossed the Samos."

Those near prepared to obey the order of the knight. Veronica was easily secured, and Sigismund quietly surrendered himself; but it did not suit Count Ragotzy to have his liberty, in like manner, restricted; and as he was never accustomed to yield a jot, in any case, where overruling necessity did not compel him, he silently determined to leave a memorable token, with Banffy and his troop, to remind them of having crossed the path of the formidable brigand. But, first coming up somewhat nearer to Sigismund, he said, in a tone, which seemed to issue from the very depths of the inner man, " Young madcap! your humour, before this, would have been somewhat chastened, but for the intrusion of these gentry. I go, and till we meet again, choose to forget thy very existence. *Then*, however, mark me! will be at once my period for recollection, and my hour of vengeance; for, as sure as I live to say it, so, certainly, when we next encounter, shall our renewed acquaintance be brief and bloody." Without awaiting the reply, which was on the lip of Sigismund, the brigand eluded the two armed men, who were on the point of capturing him, and stood at the elbow of the old knight, the commander of the party. Banffy had, unwittingly, planted himself on the brink of a ravine, or yawning cleft of the earth, which was, in a great measure, covered and concealed by a mass of trees and copsewood, that, partly taught by nature, and partly, probably, instructed by art, clustered over the opening.

" I tell you what, my old cock," said the Cygani leader, in the ear of the astounded chieftain, " you threatened, awhile ago, to set my head rolling towards the river. One good turn demands another; but as I have no means of decapitation at hand, your whole body must fain accompany your head in its downward course."

Saying these words, Count Ragotzy, taking the ancient knight at unawares, compressed his powerful arms around his waist, lifting him fairly from the earth. As if gifted with the physical powers of that athlete, that Pausanias speaks of,* the brigand clipped his captive with an iron embrace, that, from his being wholly unprepared for such an assault, baffled all resistance. Then, making a sudden plunge, which carried him and his burden into the very heart of the thicket, he threw himself adown the precipitous descent, with free but careful footsteps. In an instant, captor and captured, were lost among the underwood. Cries of "Stop the villain!" resounded from a hundred voices, and, aided by branches, bushes, &c., the whole troop scrambled, in the brigand's track, down the declivity; but, ere they had anything like thridded the steep bye-path, which conducted to the thoroughfare, the Count reached the little rustic structure of unhewn timber, that spanned the stream at the narrow, and stood, for an instant, swinging his knightly prize, half-way over the crossing. "Take the reward of thy officiousness, old John Banffy, as thou callest thyself," cried Ragotzy, "and be more careful, henceforth, how thou venturest to threaten the Cygani leader, Alaric Polgar." Having thus spoken, he dropped the knight headlong into the stream; and, ere the men-at-arms arrived on the bridge, to the assistance of their chief, Count Ragotzy's form was descried far away, shooting like a meteor athwart the strath. Some of the party, however, would not desist from the pursuit, but they presently returned, and reported the fact of the Cygani, having sought refuge within the imperial lines.

Meantime, by the dispersion of the guards, our hero and the fair daughter of Vicchy, found themselves unex-

* Milo of Crotona. The strength of this man was prodigious. See Paus. lib vi. cap. 14. He would grasp a pomegranate so fast, by the mere strength of his fingers, that none could take it from him,..save, indeed, says Ælian, his mistress.—Æl. ii. cap. 24.

pectedly liberated, having "nobody with them at sea but themselves," in the solitude of the forest. Veronica had stood leaning against a tree during the hubbub; but not all her previous state of apprehension, had caused such an emotion, as that with which her bosom now fluttered. Never was the flush of her loveliness more dazzling. Her eyes were radiant with thankfulness, and the glow of grateful feelings shone, through the medium of her transparent features. With graceful embarrassment, having expressed her acknowledgments for the services, which Sigismund would have rendered her, she earnestly entreated him to reconduct her to her father.

The young count readily acceded to her request, observing, as they struck into the opposite path, "that the troop of Vicchy had suffered him, on his parole, to join in pursuit of the infamous Cygani, and that, however incalculably precious his freedom of action was to him, just then, he still felt himself bound to render up his person, into their hands."

Again Veronica's eyes gazed upon her preserver, with an expression, in which the most confiding dependence, and the most feminine admiration were involuntarily blended. The pair, for some time, mutually lost in the depths of tender thought, and with scarcely the exchange of a word, followed back the path, which the damsel and her ruthless captor had before trod. At length, Sigismund, while assisting his fair companion over the stepping-stones of a shallow brook, broke the embarrassing silence, by proceeding to inquire, how she came to be concealed in that lonely hut; at the same time expressing his surprise, at her having eluded the notice of the brigand, and Count Maylat, during their sojourn therein. In return, he learned, that Walter, (whom, during his short detention in the brigand's cave, our hero had gained over to his services), agreeably to the plan, which he and Sigismund had chalked out, in Veronica's presence, the day before, had safely effected her deliverance. He

had afterwards conducted her to that ruinous hovel, where Sigismund, to his no small amazement, beheld her, just as she fainted off in her father's arms; "but it was through very joy," she said, looking our hero full in the face, with a touching, and most feminine expression of interest and reliance; "Walter told me," proceeded Veronica, "he had a deed to do, by your orders, in the cunicular fortress, which, previous to my escape from thence, he was unwilling to attempt. This deed he left me, to accomplish, promising to return to conduct me to some neighbouring village, as soon as possible. You may conceive my terror, on the Cygani's entering the ruinous tenement; at first, mistaking that horrible man for Walter, I was on the very brink of falling into the villain's hands: then I slunk, luckily without being discovered, into the recess of the fire-place, where, with little difficulty, I contrived to place myself on a ledge, within its ample chimney; nor did I descend, till the voice of my father seemed to me an assurance of safety. I recollect no more, till, to my indescribable horror, I found myself seated in the company of that *Feni féreg*,* even where yonder crystal fount bubbles forth its music."

Sigismund gazed upon the lovely narrator, with an interest of a kind, he had never felt for any other human being, as he listened to her account, with respectful and absorbed attention. "Pray God!" he ejaculated, when she had finished, "that Walter have indeed succeeded in the object, whose importance, nevertheless, could hardly justify him in leaving thee alone and unprotected, in so desolate a spot." He paused, and then turning to his fair companion, said, "I may yet, by the blessing of Providence, obtain my freedom this night. Dear lady Veronica," he continued, and at the tender epithet, the damsel bent her head aside, to hide the

* Devil-dragon.

tell-tale blood, which stole over her features; "If you see Walter, intimate to him what has transpired, and bid him have horses ready saddled, half a mile north-east of the regent's camp. Will you do thus much for one, who ——. Indeed, there may interests depend on your kindness herein, of no ordinary magnitude; but the nature of which, this is neither the place, nor the occasion to explain. Dear Lady Veronica," he repeated, "may I rely on you?"

The young lady was somewhat surprised, and no less touched by the depth of feeling, with which Sigismund delivered these last words. A vague and fluttering joy stole to her heart. Mastering her emotions, however, she expressed her readiness to do his message, and at this moment the abstracted pair were surprised to find, (and, truth to say, the illusions which were rising fast within their bosoms, were somewhat ungratefully dissipated) that they had already threaded the distance to the lonely hut, at the entrance of which we leave them, to give an account of themselves to the wounded sire, (who was still awaiting some sort of litter from the camp) and relate the manner of the young lady's rescue, "after such flourish" as seemeth meet to the gentle girl, and her gallant deliverer.

MANUSCRIPT XXIII.

"Non ita Di Getici faxint, manesque parentum,
Ut mea converso relegam vestigia cursu."

CLAUD.

THE course of our story follows, at present, the fortunes of its hero. Within an hour after having lost sight of him, at the close of the last manuscript, we find Count Rodna introduced into a small solitary tent, guarded by a few men-at-arms, who had formed part of the corps of Vicchy. He supposed, that his attendants would have at once conveyed him before Martinuzzi, but on his arrival at the Hungarian camp, he learned, to his no small chagrin, that the regent, shortly after midnight, had crossed the river with the greater part of his army. The remaining division was in their course of passage, and it was calculated, that ere dawn, not an Hungarian soldier, or straggling follower of the camp, would be left behind. These tidings were peculiarly distressing to Sigismund; and only by a powerful effort, could he control his emotion sufficiently to inquire, who was the officer immediately in command? From the reply, which he had some difficulty to elicit, he learned, that Valentinian, Count Turascus, yet remained on the hither side the Samos, superintending the embarkation of the men. Sigismund then demanded to be brought to speech of the count,

without delay. The serjeant-at-arms, to whom he applied himself, surveyed our hero, with a strict eye, from crown to heel, before he made answer. There was something in the commanding form, and in the air, voice, and manner, of the young *kanactz*, which, notwithstanding the associated remembrance of the generic disrepute of his class, and the unfavourable accident of his being under arrest, filled the mind of the armed official, with, he knew not what impression of awe and reverence.

The more he strove to divest himself of that feeling of deference, which stole over him in the presence of Sigismund, the more he found, in spite of every effort, his unwilling spirit borne down, as at the address of a person, to whom high command, and important duties were familiar. Still the military habits of the man rebelled, strongly, against that higher instinct of his nature, which made him sensible of the innate dignity of the captive cattle keeper. In consequence of this internal debate, it was after some preliminary hesitancy, that the serjeant adjusted his reply.

"Do you see, sir kanactz," he said, leaning on his arquebuse, "it were not regular, nor mayhap quite safe, for me to trouble the general, at so critical a time, about any meaner matter, than that in which he is at present engaged. And such, I reckon," he added, with a half smile, "must be, aught that you can have to say to his noble countship. Suppose, my untimely importunity cause him to hand me over to the camp-marshal:—only think of that!"

"Believe me, *jobb emberem*,"* answered Sigismund; "it is of the last consequence to the very existence of the Hungarian army, that I should instantly confer with the graf; an hour hence, and my tidings will come too late."

"Sir kanactz," replied the man, "I'll do the most I

* My friend.

can: if it be the general's pleasure to have you brought before him, well and good; if not, I would, I be not made responsible for my officiousness, in drawing off his attention from the business in hand. So only think of that!"

"My good soldier," said Sigismund, "you need fear nought." Then after a pause, during which a sudden thought seemed to cross his mind, he added, "Do you deliver this hangier to Count Turascus, and say, the son of the man, whose property it formerly was, demands an interview." With these words, Sigismund displayed a small ornamented dirk, which he handed over to the serjeant.

"Only to think of this!" cried the latter; and then with a grave elongation of countenance, he added; "I know not whether, in undertaking this mission, I be not following those false fires, without light or heat, that lure one to one's doom; but spite of devil and *die polter giester*,* I will do your bidding, These characters, belike, on the handle, signify your father's name, unless, saving your presence, the jolly woodsman possessed himself of the weapon, after a mode somewhat obnoxious to the *varmegyetol*,† were law and justice duly administered in the land."

"My father obtained this little instrument at the battle of Tocai," said Sigismund.

"What! only to think of that!—Indeed! I have heard speak of that fatal day,—but under what banner? Ha! take back the trophy, acquired by the disaster of my native country! Thy father, sir kanactz,—take it back,—fought for the Austrians."

"No, by my soul!" exclaimed Sigismund; "he fought beneath the Hungarian colours, upheld by Count Turascus,‡ he played a brave part all day, and only quitted the field at night-fall, in company with King John."

* Earth imps, *i. e.* will-o'-the-wisps. † Justices.

‡ This must be some mistake. Francis Boden, the usurper of the

"Say you so? Oh how I honour him!" cried the serjeant; "I will do your behest. — And this poignard?"

"—Was placed by Count Turascus, opportunely, within my father's hands, when the melée was at the hottest; and being hard pressed, it contributed to save his life," replied Sigismund.

"Only to think of that!—but I understand," said the subaltern;—"a reward of valour? I'll do your message to the count, sir kanactz, — I'll do your message; tarry here in the dark, with that assurance to light up thy loneliness. Yonder, by good luck, are two men-at-arms, whom I will post at the entrance, — more for matter of form, do you see, than anything else,—ay, ay,—only for form sake, sir kanactz; but a soldier must, above all things, mind his duty,—and the general would marvel much, on coming up, if he found my prisoner unguarded. Ave Mary! only to think of that!" With this ejaculation, after committing the person of Sigismund to the custody of the men in question, the serjeant-at-arms hied him to the banks of the Samos.

Meantime, the reflections which agitated the mind of Sigismund, were not of the most tranquil character. The cold grey of dawn already crept over the heavens, and stole insensibly on the darkness of the night; and the youth trembled to think, that unless he were speedily liberated, he would be disabled, from performing that decisive part in the bloody business of the forthcoming day, which he had long meditated, and the nature of which will more particularly appear in the sequel. He walked to and fro with an agitated frame, and impetuous but interrupted steps, within the limits of the tent, as if action were some relief to the intolerable suspense, which racked his bosom. Weighty cares pressed upon his

revenues of the bishopric of Alba-Julia, bore the Hungarian standard at the battle of Tocai. He was taken prisoner, and (says the historian), diuturnam sustinuit captivitatem, in qua et mortuus est. Joan Zermagh, Rer. Gest. inter Ferd. & Joan. Comment. lib. 1. s. vii.

mind, and he stopped from time to time,—now in hopes, his ears might catch the approach of Turascus; and again, as if to arrest the ideas, which shot across the region of his brain, with trackless swiftness, and consider them with greater accuracy. He felt, that it was the crisis of his fortunes, and that a few hours would either pave the way to a brilliant destiny, or perchance, consign him to an obscure grave, unhonoured, unwept, undistinguished, and unknown. Such an apprehension fell, like an ice-bolt, on the soaring spirit of Count Rodna.

"It is not loss of life, I care for," he said, internally; "to the equal mind of a warrior, the gory skeleton hath no terrors; but to me, he threatens more than mere extinction of breath,—he approaches, as the climax of a series of humiliation and subterfuge; he sets the seal of his fatal dart on the long cares, that have, since childhood, tainted the healthful freshness of my cheek, and stolen the very life from my heart. In his shadowy lure he shuts out those aspirations of fame, which have been my prayer and dream, during many years; — a prayer so fervent, as to have all the quality of faith, and a dream so sweet, as to fall on my soul like an oblivious antidote to grief, transforming into an airy structure of delight, the house of bondage itself. No; death comes not to me, as he comes to others. Hungary, in my fall, will lose, unknowingly, one, consecrate and set apart to her defence and service. And why, at this instant, do my thoughts revert to death? Is it not, because I feel it to be the happier alternative. Oh! better far to die, than live longer as I have lived; better, the son of my father, now he is acquainted with his rights, were laid beside him in his dark chamber, than witness the fair land of his birth bestrode by an usurper; or worse, consigned over, all clogged with foreign wars and internal dissensions, to the false and feeble sovereignty of a weak maiden!" He paused in his mental soliloquy, near the entrance of the tent to listen; then, after awhile, his

mind and body simultaneously resumed the exercise of their powers. "Yes," he said, as he strode across the tent: "my fate hath brought me at last to this most perilous and doubtful crisis, but my single chance of coming off triumphant, depends on Count Turascus. Alas! if he lag much longer, Coloswar is like to page with *Warna*,* and with Mohacs. The Basha Achamates, will scarcely make a demonstration in favour of Martinuzzi;—the correspondence of the Ottoman emperor with the Moldavian waivode, discovers his alienation from the regent's interests, and betrays a deep-rooted dread of his abilities. If Martinuzzi, as I misdoubt, rely on the co-operation of the Turk, he trusts to a rotten reed." Sigismund paused on this reflection, which, by a natural association, induced a new train of thought. His mind adverted to the conspiracy of the magnats, which comprehended the execrable design of Count Ragotzy.—"I took up my sojourn in the brigand's den," he said, "with the view of destroying, root and branch, that villain's means of laying waste the land. This sudden press of time and circumstances, will yet, belike, prove his reprieve from justice. I *would have* henceforth averted these outrages from Hungary. I *have* done no more than insure the personal liberty of her regent for a day. So far, however, *on such a day as this*,—'tis well,—but these traitor magnats will certainly fall off during the engagement, from whatever various motives, when it comes to the trial, they will make it no point of honour, to fight to the death in his cause, to whose authority they are so ill inclined. And now, forewarned, fore-armed, Piadena will be drawn out in dreadful array of battle, and instead of taking the invaders by surprise, the regent will himself be surprised. "Would to God,"

* Fought Nov. 10, A. D. 1444. The previous perjury, and its rightful punishment, in the defeat and death of Wladislaus, have bestowed a sad celebrity on the field of Warna.

exclaimed Sigismund, with impassioned feeling, "I were free, to avert so fatal a catastrophe from Hungary, as at this hour impendeth! Still, still, Turascus comes not. Heaven and earth! Suppose he have crossed the water! My brain's on fire,—the day cometh on apace,—oh that I were without these lines, aback of my gallant steed!" The speaker hushed his voice, and for the twentieth time within the last half-hour, abruptly arrested at once his steps and his reflections. "Another minute elapsed!" he presently said: "Another minute! when every most trifling portion of time that finds me fettered, teems with my own and country's destruction!" Again he listened for awhile, but caught not the sound his ears thirsted for. Throwing himself on his knees, he pressed both hands to his brow with energetic force,—he would have prayed, but his tongue felt parched, and his breathings were stifled in his throat,—the nervous impatience of his soul was testified by the big damp drops, that stood like beads on his brow. "Oh that I were entangled in the swift whirlwind!" he exclaimed, "so that it bore me away to ——, but, hush! Do I not hear the sounds of approaching voices?"

Sigismund sprung to his feet, and, rushing to a sort of hanging, which dropped down before the entrance, bent every nerve in an attitude of listening. He could distinguish the accents of two persons, conversing in a low tone; but Sigismund's hopes fell still-born on his heart, at discovering the speakers to be the men-at-arms, who were keeping guard over him. Involuntarily, he caught a glimmering of their subject of discourse; but it appeared so little interesting to him, in his present state of morbid impatience, that, if an after-occurrence had not thrown some light on the matter, it is probable, it would have left no trace whatever on his mind.

"So," said one of the men-at-arms, "the Count Balassi's horsemen are like to roam at large over the

*pusztas** of Transylvania, and turn false *usarous*,† like many true men before them."

"Why, comrade," replied the other soldier, "they are invited, d'ye see, in some sort, by their very loss, to meditate, for themselves, their proper destination: though, by'r lady! in the lifetime of their chief, they were hardly better disciplined, than a band of ordinary Wallachian depredators, and conducted themselves, commonly, as riotous and as unruly as ever did Peter the Bloody's dare-devils, before that richter, they call Vilez Iwan, stopped short his career."

"There's reason in what you say," observed the first speaker, — "the Count Balassi, and the Moldavian prince, understood each other tolerably well, or his graf-ship is sadly belied."

"Ay, ay," was the response, "not a whit to choose between them, save, indeed, that Balassi never turned infidel, which, belike, will make some difference in their present treatment. However, talking of infidels, you may lay this up in your mind, an' you will; — he that did the deed, will be sent to bear the soul of Balassi company ere sunrise!"

"What! Abu Obeida, the emir? — Well, I should guess as much, if you had not told me; — by the holy mass! the lances of Balassi ever loved their leader."

"I overheard," said the other interlocutor, "some half dozen devise how to waylay the Turk, on his road to the camp of the Basha Achamates, which, as I understand, lies not many leagues distant."

"Hath, then, the Emir departed?" demanded the first speaker.

"Yes; and, to judge from the scowl on his brow, in no little heat; but he'll be cooler anon; — it is not long since, he left, in company with one Halis, a captain of

* Literally, uninhabited countries.

† An approbrious term of the day for such Hungarian military as gained their livelihood by plundering the community.

Janissaries, who arrived hither in the night, bearing missives from Hermanstadt. — But stand to your arms, comrade, lo! the general!"

At that moment, Count Turascus came up, with hurried footsteps, and a bewildered expression of countenance, holding in his hand the token, which the subaltern had been directed to present to him. He was attended by that person, whom, passing within the entrance of the tent, he ordered, in a troubled voice, to keep guard on the outside. "Quit not the spot, Yosa,"* he added, "I may require your services." Several minutes elapsed before the count again showed himself, and Sigismund accompanied him into the chill, sharp twilight, of the new-born day. He was replying to the pretended cattle-keeper, when the eye of the serjeant-at-arms lit on their emerging forms. "In that, and all things else," said Turascus, in a broken tone, whilst the big tears rapidly chased one another, down the furrows of his manly cheek, "command me." And, with these words, having rebuckled the broad belt, that girt his waist, he presented it, together with the sheathed weapon by his side, with respectful courtesy, into Sigismund's hands, who, gracefully receiving it, said —

"Many thanks, my dear lord; and, please God, we may yet meet ere the day be many hours older, — but our parting here must needs be as abrupt, as our introduction. — Farewell! wave ceremony. — To the regent! Show him the peril which environs him. — Ha!" he suddenly broke off, "Good God! you will be too late! — hark to those cannon!"

Turascus' countenance fell, as he, together with the subaltern and the two men-at-arms, bent their heads aside, and hushed their breath to catch, at intervals, the booming of the martial thunder, in the neighbourhood of Coloswar. It awoke the drowsy morn, and thrilled

* Josa; Joseph.

through the still air, like the pang of day-break, for the horrors, which were about to be enacted. The simultaneous prayer to Heaven, which burst, at that moment, from the lips of the half-dozen true Hungarians, might be pronounced, in more than one point of view, sublime. Sigismund first broke the entranced impression, which the sudden announcement of battle produced on each of their minds.

" Count Turascus," he cried, " the engagement has already commenced, — haste to your post, — my mind misgives me, that the day will go against you ; but, while one true patriot stands to his arms, *surrender not — fly not*. Tell the regent, only to keep his ground, at whatever cost, and Hungary may yet be saved." The eyes of Sigismund gleamed in accordance with his gallant spirit, and his ever fine form became even more imposing, under the influence of his feelings. After reflecting for a minute, he suddenly demanded, " Who bears your colours ?"

" For whom Martinuzzi reserves that important charge, I have not heard," said Turascus.

" Well, be he who he may, bid him," cried Sigismund, with an air and emphasis of inexpressible grandeur, " hack his spurs from his heels, and exalt the ensign on one spot, rescue or no rescue, while the current of life courses in his veins. This day shall manifest the wisdom of our country's practice, and justify King Bela in the eyes of posterity.* But breath and time are alike valuable. Can this man accompany me a short distance to a spot, where I look to find a steed ready saddled, to convey me —" Sigismund stopped short.

" Whither, at such a time, my noble lord," cried Turascus, " in the name of Heaven ?"

* The custom of the ensign who carried the national standard, wearing no spurs in battle, to prevent his quitting the field, originated with King Bela I. It was the occasion of frequent disasters, and the loss of the battle of Tocai ought probably to be attributed to that cause.

"It were long to explain my destination," replied Sigismund. "Enough — we may meet ere sunset; till when, the good genius of Hungary wait upon you! — no ceremony — adieu!" Sigismund turned away, and Count Turascus bidding the subaltern assist the strange young noble to horse, gazed for a minute after him, with a countenance, in which mournful surprise, was strongly depicted, and then directed his rapid steps across the Samos, where, vaulting on his war-horse, he gave him the rein, and with impetuous speed darted by the troops, as they were forming in battle array, to where, on a more elevated part of the ground, his practised eye distinguished the regent, amid a group of chiefs and principal officers. Meanwhile return we to Count Rodna, who, at a brisk pace, measured the distance, between the regent's deserted cantonment and a certain point of the umbrageous barrier, whither he directed his steps. The subaltern followed close at his heels for a minute or two, in silence; but perceiving no likelihood of his companion addressing him, his curiosity shortly got the better even of his involuntary deference for the pretended cattle-keeper. He came up closer, and looking in the kanactz's face, with a half-furtive, half-inquiring glance, said, "If I may take the liberty, sir, I should not be greatly surprised to learn, that your profession be not the tending of cattle, after all." He stopped; but finding his observation elicited no reply, presently resumed — "A sort of masquerading, belike?" Another pause ensued, to no more purpose than the preceding. "It may be, your disguisement is meant to prove of service to our beloved regent?"

Sigismund turned a look on the speaker, whose shadowy paleness deepened into something like displeasure. "Beloved!" he murmured, under his breath.

The serjeant remarked the pallid cast of his countenance, but misapprehended the cause. "You look worn, sir, from the effects of last night's want of rest," he said.

"Ay, beloved, indeed, is Martinuzzi, save by certain grandees, who envy him his genius and his virtues. I have good cause to honor him: it is not many weeks, since he promoted me to my present rank, and that," he continued, erecting his tall person, with an air of military pride, "without a breath of solicitation on my part, but merely from what he heard of my military character. Only think of that!"

This seemed a favorite topic with our subaltern; and he talked on, as if merely to gratify his loquacious humour. "There was many a grade got in our corps, when captain Hubert was sent to prison, for treasonable practices."

Sigismund looked up, and his face discovered a greater expression of interest, than his pale features, previously, exhibited.

The subaltern observed the change, and taking it for a sort of encouragement, thus continued — "'Twas a sad affair, to be sure—it came like a sudden shock to all our men, the next day, although *I could have told them*,— but that is neither here nor there." Here the subaltern's communication and his march, together came to a full stop. He and Sigismund arrived beneath a group of walnut-trees, whose implicated leaves charged the thin autumnal air of morn, with delicious fragrance. Near this grove, they observed a man, dressed in a sort of military habit, leading up and down two war-horses, with appropriate furniture.

"Walter, thou art punctual, and thy being here at all, I take to be a good omen," said Sigismund.

The person addressed, after making a profound reverence, proceeded to inform the young count of his having waited, under cover of the trees, since the earliest peep of dawn. I singled out the place of appointment," he said, "agreeably to the direction of the lady."

"We'll speak of that anon," interrupted Sigismund, as he mounted one of the gallant destriers. "My friend,"

he said, addressing the bewildered subaltern, "receive my thanks for having borne my message to Count Turascus,—thanks are all that I have now to offer; but, lest, peradventure, hereafter, my power should coincide with my will to be of service, tell me how thou art called?"

"My name is Yosa," answered the serjeant.

"My gratitude shall fasten that name on my memory," said Sigismund. "Farewell, Yosa!" And, saying these words, the young count and his attendant galloped off, cutting the waste air, as if they were the incarnate spirits of the hurricane.

For some minutes the subaltern stood gazing after them in apparent consternation, at the velocity of their progress, as the horsemen appeared and disappeared, among the trees, in the curvatures of their path, till they were wholly lost, behind the numberless boles that occupied, in dark lines, the rapidly extending space of the intermediate woodland. Then he stood for a minute as if stupified, and might have remained so still longer, if the dropping succession of distant shots, sounding like the first "big drops" of the thunder-cloud, which precede the tempest, had not recalled him to himself. "Well, only think of that!" cried Yosa, as, collecting his astonished faculties, he retraced his steps, at a brisk pace, towards the site of the deserted camp, which again partook of the solitude, that pervaded the vast forest, with which it was, in a great measure, encompassed.

Meanwhile, as if incarnate death were in pursuit, the ground disappeared, from under the horses' hoofs of Sigismund and his companion, and they traversed the sweeping range of hills, over which their road wound, without drawing in rein; nor did they slacken their pace, till they were passing through an avenue of leafless larch and lilac trees, which made the characteristic approach to the few Transylvanian hamlets, that were dispersed over those thinly-populated cattle-farms.*

* Pusztas; uninhabited countries.

At the entrance of a village of mud-built huts, rudely constructed as those of an Indian wigwam, they found, to their great chagrin, the causeway almost blocked up, by a concourse of persons of all ages and sexes, who were awaiting the coming forth of a devout procession of the peasantry, which at that early hour, was commencing its pilgrimage to some miraculous fount, slowly, and with difficulty, our horsemen thridded their way, through the dense assemblage of human bodies, gay in their motley holiday attire, of yellow, green, and purple cloth, and proportionably elevated and noisy. The crowd sometimes opened in a lane, but oftener impeded the progress of the travellers with vacant recklessness. These people were arrayed, for the most part, in the national dress of Transylvania, the arrangement of which, is particularly imposing, and its almost classical effect has been campared to that of the costume of the peasantry of the Roman empire. They wore a tunic of white cloth, which, where it terminated about the knees, was finished off by a broad stripe of coloured wool—the pantaloons descended, in elaborate folds, and the goat-skin sandals were secured to the foot and ancle, by the aid of reticulated strings. The enormous calpac, in the shape of an inverted cone, lightly surmounted the head; the nape of the neck was left entirely bare, while the hair in front was worn à la Brutus, instead of its being plaited all round, and tied in knots, as among the Magyari.

One of these picturesque personages, after having been almost trodden down by Sigismund, owing partly to the tardiness of the man's movements, and in part to that strong impulse, in the mind of our hero, which urged him forwards to the performance of its ministry, at whatever risk, shouted after him—"Have a care, young *kanactz*, or you may chance to be unhorsed, as happened to a certain Turk not long ago."

Sigismund gave slight heed to the speaker, and, by dint of skill and determination, at length fairly found

himself entangled, within the single long narrow street of the little village. Here he was compelled to draw up on one side, to let the procession pass. A-head, marched the curate "proudly eminent," in his long *purple canonicals*,* with some dignity, but more difficulty, exalting a rude and massive crucifix. A lingering line of youthful acolytes, bearing a banner, where the figure of St. Helena swung lazily on the autumnal air, and shone resplendent on a field of azure, were close on his heels. After them came some half hundred young damsels, in picturesque attire, who, in a chant that filled the welkin, and ran along the whole extent of the village, lifted up their voices, in praise of the saint, to whose blessed station, they were ostentatiously carrying, in the midst, a black earthenware pitcher, moulded after some antique model. This they purposed filling with the canonised maidens' water. Two of the parochial *dorfrichters*,† supporting certain emblems of Catholic worship, and draperied in waving white surplices, brought up the rear, whilst an eager curious multitude indiscriminately pressed upon either flank of "the long drawn pomp," or with little attention to order, but with more or less demonstration of delight, devoutly followed in the wake.

The thinly thatched cottage, near which Sigismund unwillingly checked his horse, stood a little detached, like every other in the village. Its gable ends rose from the roof, and, as was usual, it presented to the highway, the discoloured wall of its lateral front. It was defended by a slight enclosure or rail of wicket work, and was pierced by two deep and small embrasures. The actual front of this domicile ran back some short way, where, beneath a sort of penthouse was enchained, for the time, the deep-mouthed guardian of the premises, who having no "gentle Des-

* The Hungarians delight in colours:—It is rare to see any one in black—the priests themselves being habited in purple. See Brown's Travels in Dacia, Styria, &c.—London, 4to. 1688.

† Dorfrichters, *i. e.* clergymen.

demona" to reconcile him to his "circumscription and restraint," yelped loudly to obtain his customary "unhoused free condition."

"Would you wish to pass your horses within the gate, and alight, till your road be clear, sir travellers?" asked a withered crone, standing within the jagged paling, in a cracked and feeble tone of voice.

Sigismund was about to decline the invitation, but being respectfully reminded by his companion, that both steeds and riders, would be all the better able to prosecute their journey, after having taken some slight refection, he acquiesced in the arrangement, and the next minute saw our hero seated, before a pyramidical stove, in the common sod-built room of the mean-looking abode, which turned out to be one of those inferior hostelries, mostly frequented by the lowest order of *fuhrleutes* or carriers. A refreshment, consisting of sour-crout, brown bread, and excellent butter, was speedily produced, and laid on the rough wooden table, which made a fixture in the middle of the apartment.

The old dame apologised, for not being provided with better entertainment, which she ascribed to her having already feasted divers parties that morning; and she lamented especially, that her last eggs had been swallowed, not long before, by some mighty grandee of a Turk, whose horse had stumbled, and thrown him on the rugged *pave*, near the threshold of her inn.

Sigismund listened, with more apparent interest, than he had previously exhibited, and inquired, whether the Turk was quite alone when he chanced to fall, and being informed, there were two journeying in company, the discourse he had overheard that morning recurred to him, and he concluded that these equestrians must have been Abu Obeida, and the captain of the Janissaries. After reflecting a moment on this information, a new train of thought suggested itself to his mind. "Abu Obeida is the accredited agent of the sultan, and, therefore,

his confidential friend," he argued internally. "If I could only prevail upon him to carry a message—no,—a verbal message will be spent on air." Sigismund turned, and addressing his hostess, requested writing materials.

That venerable body shook her head, in profound amazement, observing, that during almost half a century, that she and her dead husband before her, had kept a public, she had never heard preferred, such an unconscionable requisition.

"Are not implements for writing to be had in all Koras," (such being the name of the straggling village, where they were detained,) demanded Sigismund, with a gesture of impatience.

"Nay thee now, sir kanactz, the inhabitants, I wis, are no belated," was the rejoinder; "and yet, belike—" the old dame paused.

"Ay, my good woman; think again," said Sigismund, encouragingly; "surely some one or other, must deal in such commodities."

"La, you there now! I fear me nay," replied the hostess; "yet I partly remember me, when I have been up to confession, at Father Matthias's, to have seen something of what you mention, on his reverence's table. But, of a verity, the father is out on the pilgrimage."

"Nevertheless, would you not make the trial, whether they are not to be had in his absence?" inquired Sigismund, at the same time enforcing his request, by that clenching argument, which, in all times and countries, accommodates itself to the meanest capacity, and soon dissipates every scruple.

"Why marry, sir kanatcz," said the obliging dame, "the father's dwelling is no great step, across the field, at the back of our hamlet, and I warrant me, if my daughter Ernestine, who keeps house for his reverence, could not contrive to get at the articles in demand. At all events, I will do my best for your pieces;" and the aged dame, incontinently, hobbled off to the curate's

domicile, and was soon seen to return, to the high satisfaction of Sigismund, bearing in her hands the requisite materials.

Our hero, hastily traced a few lines, and then, having folded the paper, in the shape of a missive, superscribed and posited it about his person. Finding the procession had gone by, he prepared for departure. Whilst mounting, he observed :—

"The Turkmen you spoke of, erewhiles, good woman, were bound northward, I ween."

The old hostess looked at Sigismund, with a peculiar expression of countenance, while shaking her lanky fingers, in a most admonitory style, she made answer :— "I will give you a bit of caution, in return for thy munificence, courteous sir kanactz, or whoever else thou art, for my mind misdoubts me, thou art above thy seeming : join not the company of those Turkmen, or thou may chance to fare thee worse for it."

Extreme as was the anxiety of Sigismund, to spur onward, there was something implied, in the voice and manner of the woman, that obliged him to restrain his impatience. "In Heaven's name !" he said ; "what doth thy speech import ?"

"Thus much," replied the woman ; "whilst the turbaned lords, you asked about, were refreshing themselves, in my hostelry, arrives me, certain roving horsemen, who live by the sword, and call for a flask of korosian : one of them alighted, and passed into the *speise-saal.** On his return, I overheard him say, to his comrades, that the infidels they were pursuing, were, at that moment, carousing within ; and then, not heeding my presence, because I wot they deemed me deaf, or, at least, too good a Christian to bewray their purpose, they planned, in my hearing, to waylay the Turkmen, some miles down the road, and, (she added, in a cautionary

* Speise-saal,—the common eating-room of an inn.

whisper,) and murder them, sir kanactz! So, if you would follow my counsel, an you come up with the unbelievers alive, as is not unlikely, from their slow rate of travel, you would gallop by without taking any notice; since the cutting off, in Erdély, of these Mahometans, when opportunity serves, be no more than just you wis."

On saying these last words, his prudent admonisher, sagaciously bowed her head; and Sigismund, and his attendant, were left to pursue their route, which they did, with as great celerity, as the fleet animals that bore them, could be urged to put forth.

They had measured about two leagues from Koras, when, having surmounted the gradual ascent, which, ever since they left that village, the road presented, they found the summit commanded an expanse of undulating woodland. For several miles, the eye might overlook the heavy outlines of the vast forest, broken, here and there, by the elevated crest of some giant tree, above the rest, and trace, at intervals, the higher ridges of the waving line, which they purposed following, sometimes glowing radiant, in unexpected sunshine, but oftener veiled in the grey mists of early morning.

Our hero's orb of sight, however, was not occupied afar off, in piercing through the capricious haze of distance, but paused on objects more within its scope, as well as more interesting. Half-way up a somewhat steep acclivity, that lay right in their track, our travellers could distinguish the stationary forms of armed horsemen; and as Sigismund's eye wandered to the spot, he readily apprehended, they were the followers of Balassi, awaiting the coming up of the Emir, whose person, together with that of his companion, was at present hidden in one of the intermediate hollows.

However powerful the impulse, which prompted our hero, either to forewarn the Turk of his danger, or otherwise to come in to his rescue, he found it no easy task,

to analyze his motives. He had overheard his guards discuss the manner of Balassi's death, and whatever little sympathy there might have been, between himself and that lawless magnat, he had, and could have, no feelings in common with his ruthless murderer. He acknowledged to himself, that the blood of the Turkish basha, would be justly shed, in atonement for that of the Hungarian noble; but he felt an invincible repugnance, to the mode, in which the infidel's infraction of the laws, both of nature, and of nature's origin, was to meet its punishment. "The murder of Balassi, is no justification for Balassi's avengers perpetrating another murder," he argued with himself, as instinctively, he put his horse upon his quickest paces.

Whether his recollection of the missive, which he meant Abu Obeida to transmit to Solyman, weighed anything in the nice balancing of Sigismund's mind, we cannot exactly determine. It is certain, his panting steed charged the waste air, with flakes of visible foam, as our hero impelled him headlong, down a declivity of considerable sweep, and then, after continuing at the same pace, along very little of the level in the valley, again galloped up the opposite ascent. Having surmounted the brow of the hill, overlooking a deep, wooded hollow, that terminated in a rise, proportioned to the previous descent, our hero perceived, that the objects of his kind pursuit had already traversed the sweeping vale, and were in the act of making their slow way, up the acclivity.

The horsemen he had first noticed remained stationary and were about a quarter of a mile in advance of their' expected prey. Sigismund, however, animated by the hope of being yet in time to come up to their rescue, pushed on, without drawing in rein. Meantime, Abu Obeida and his companion experienced some natural misgivings, on observing the disposition of the five armed

horsemen, about the middle of the ascent, up which they were labouring.

"Halis," said Abu Obeida, "should yon Christians seek to rob and murder us, as, by Allah! seemeth to me not unlikely, we must employ our wits, if we hope to prevent them. I have nothing but my scymitar and this hangier about me; but thou—what weapon hast brought with thee?"

"My lord," replied Halis, "I regret to report, that my slight kinskal * is all my means, defensive and offensive. Might I presume to advise, I should recommend our turning our horses' heads."

"That will I not, Halis," said Abu Obeida, "and for two reasons; one is, that as I never hitherto showed my back to a foe, (for that matter of Vienna is scarcely an exception,) so I were loath, my old age should shame my past life. My other reason is, that from the brow of the last hill, we descended, I descried in the distance a body of *acanziz*, † hastening hitherward. They have doubtless been sent by Achamates for our escort, should we require it. *Allah kereem!* God is merciful! But mark me," he continued, "the least symptom of hesitation on our parts, which yonder men discover, will bring them, if they mean hostilely, directly down upon us, and accelerate the moment of their attack. Let us, therefore, hold ourselves ready for the onset; but proceed, as if we entertained no apprehensions of its occurring."

Thus pre-admonished, Halis alternately urged and restrained his horse, and both, without obviously altering their rate of progress, maintained the most leisurely pace, consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey. But, however slowly they travelled, their steeds, at length, brought them, where their expectant foes remained drawn up across the road. "Infidel dog!"—"damned assas-

* A curved sword, with a sharp edge on the concave side.

† A kind of volunteer cavalry among the Turks.

sin !"—" bloody villain !" were the sort of objurgations, freely showered upon the heads of the Ottomans, as the angry, but faithful adherents of the murdered Balassi pushed their steeds forward.

It happened, that three immense pyres, composed of faggots, cut down and brought thither, from an adjacent wood, had been left on one side of the road, within a short space of the ground chosen for the assault. They described three sides of a square, and formed a sort of barricade, which could only be carried in front. Abu Obeida, reconnoitring the ground, as he came near, by an expressive look, had drawn the attention of his companion to the fortilage, thus providentially provided. On the purpose of the armed horsemen being evidenced beyond a doubt, the Emir and the captain of janissaries backed their steeds, as if by a concerted plan, and ere the defensive movement could be prevented, had succeeded in entrenching themselves, within the convenient recess. Having thus guarded against being surrounded, the Ottomans prepared to repel the attack of their assailants, with the courage and determination, befitting brave men and experienced warriors. Neither party carried fire-arms;—at the time of our story, they were imperfect, and, consequently, of infrequent use.

Deeply enraged at having chosen their ground with such little foresight, as to leave room for the defensive manœuvre, they witnessed, the Hungarians spurred their steeds, with bitter and loud invectives, towards the barricade. The conflict which ensued lasted awhile, without auguring any issue either way. So long as Abu Obeida and his companion chose to act on the defensive, it was manifestly labour in vain to attempt to overcome them.

Matters were at this point, when the besiegers, as if wearied with encountering an opposition, on which they had not calculated, conferred together a few paces apart. Presently, they renewed the attack in front, whilst two

of the party, dismounting, made a reconnoissance, and ascertained there would be no difficulty in taking their enemies in the rear. Immediately they scaled the furthermost pile of wood, and dropped themselves within the barricade. Now, indeed, the danger of the Ottomans became momentarily more imminent. The horse which Abu Obeida sat was instantly hamstrung, and as the noble animal essayed to plunge forward, the Emir felt himself dragged from the saddle, and borne away from beyond his wooden ramparts. The captain of janissaries perceiving, at once, the unfortunate turn, which the combat had taken, although hopeless of the event, resolved to make the most of their sole remaining chance for victory. As one of the captors of Abu Obeida passed under his horse's neck, grasping the sword-arm of that Emir with both hands, Halis stooped forward on his stirrup, and well aware of the temper and sharpness of his curved *kinskal*, waved it in the air, and then applied the weapon's edge so dexterously to its object, that instantaneously the head of the Hungarian rolled along the earth. Abu Obeida forthwith engaged in a close grapple with the other assailant, and the next moment both went down together. Halis, meanwhile, thrust forward, with an irresistible and crashing vigour, upon the Hungarians. This offensive movement obtained for him at first, all the advantage of a surprise; and fetching a blow at his nearest opponent, which felled him to the earth, he galloped over the prostrate body, to compel his other antagonists, to keep on the defensive. These, however, met his assault with such skill and determination, that Halis was fain to concentrate his every effort to his own preservation. One of the twain, in consequence, shot past him, and, brandishing his spear aloft, urged his charger towards where Abu Obeida rolled, gasping and struggling upon the ground, in the death-gripe of his foeman. He was undermost — his sabre lay broken in twain, some few paces off. The knee of his foeman was on the breast of the Turk, and his

hands firmly compressed the infidel's throat; but ere the Hungarian had traversed the space, which divided him from the combatants, he beheld his countryman rolling lifeless in the dust, and the blade of Obeida's glittering poignard was dyed, in the heart's blood of his all but conqueror.

The Emir unloosed himself, from the relaxing grasp of his late opponent, and slowly uprose. He was unwounded indeed, but breathless, wan, and disabled from putting forth any adequate defence, against the avenging horseman, whose bright spear was uplifted to strike him to the dust. Standing totally defenceless, he raised his reeking hangier to parry the intended thrust; but his arm shook; and brain, and eye, alike reeled, beneath the gleaming brand of the Hungarian.

"Die, murderer of the noble Balassi! — die!" exclaimed the late magnat's infuriate follower, and, at the word, down came his ponderous steel, with a force, that would have cloven the Ottoman asunder, but the thrust was averted by Abu Obeida, through his very weakness. He fortunately tottered aside, and his foeman had to raise his arm anew, to repeat the blow. "*Le destin des hommes dépendait d'un moment.*" Suddenly, a loud shout shook the air, and a war-horse, which had been rushing, like a whirlwind, up the acclivity, and whose flanks showed bloody tokens of his speed, came charged with the burden of our chivalrous hero, on the scene of action. Abu Obeida's death-stroke was, in the same instant, intercepted, and the point of his opponent's weapon struck up by the spear of Sigismund.

The astonished avenger of Balassi raised his head, and turned indignantly, to confront this unlooked-for adversary. Just as their blades crossed, the first lances of the turbaned cavalry, whom Abu Obeida had originally espied in the distance, glanced on the ridge of the mountain, and the loud hail of Halis was answered by shouts of "*Ya Allah!*" from every mouth, as the whole

troop, with the roar, at once, and the speed of an avalanche, rolled down upon the combatants. The baffled followers of the murdered magnat, did not care to abide the coming storm; they galloped off, in an opposite direction, leaving three of their comrades lifeless, on the hill-side.

Halis dismounted, and approached where the Emir half-supported himself, on the arm of Sigismund, who, immediately on the flight of the Hungarian, to whom he had been opposed, had thrown himself from his charger. "My lord," said the captain of janissaries, "Allah forefend your having received any bodily injury!"

"But for this person's gallantry, I should be now in paradise, Halis," replied Abu Obeida.

The broken voice, and gasping breath of the Emir, sufficiently attested, how greatly he had suffered, in the desperate encounter. His antagonist had proved himself to be possessed of more, than ordinary muscular power, and, though the Turk's spare frame had been much inured to toil and hardship, still the mortal wrestle with so strong a man, was almost too great an exertion for one, at the advanced period of life, which Abu Obeida had attained. The violent pressure on his chest, and the sort of strangulation, induced by the gripe, that the Hungarian, for a brief period of time, kept on his throat, contributed, no doubt, to his consequent exhaustion. And now, the troop of *Acanziz* drew up; their plumed turbans waving in the air, and their rich dresses, costly cashmeres, and superb brocades, fluttering in gay and gorgeous relief, to the precious trappings of their steeds, and the martial garniture, that lurked beneath.

With extreme salutations of respect, certain of these dismounted, and, after bowing almost to the earth, and kissing the hem of his garment, assisted the Emir, on the back of a superbly caparisoned Arabian, whose trappings and housings were of silk and velvet, and reached to the ground. Wheeling about, the gorgeous cavalcade pre-

pared to defile, after the captain of janissaries and his companion, who were already considerably a-head.

Meanwhile, Sigismund, vaulting into his saddle, briefly explained what he knew of the affair, to his astonished attendant, who had just reached the scene of action. The signal to proceed was now given, and the closely compacted train of Mussulmans moved along, in a radiant line, at their customary easy and luxuriant amble.

" Ride beside us, intrepid stranger," said Abu Obeida, addressing our hero; " we would willingly disburden ourselves, according to our ability, of that great debt, which thou hast just rendered us. In what mode would you have me manifest, in the world's eye, my sense of the obligation. Ask something of me, young sir, and speak forth boldly."

Sigismund, with some coldness, made answer, that no thanks were due to him, seeing that the Turkish cavalry, by the opportuneness of their appearance, had put the Emir's foes to flight.

" We know as much, young sir," returned Abu Obeida, " but we likewise are conscious, that we are beholden to your good sword for having intercepted the marauder's stroke, ere it touched our life. Come, sir, name the guerdon, at which you value your services; for I hold it, you have no right to leave us so greatly under obligation, when, in any degree, it can be cancelled. Trust me," continued Abu Obeida, observing that his preserver still held silence, " I can do much in Erdély; and the havings, that are at my beck, however inadequate to requite the warding off of that death stroke, — few men, methinks, in thy rank of life, would contemn."

" My lord," said Sigismund, " I have but a single request to prefer, the nature of which, however apparently trivial, is of great importance to the interests of the individual, who addresses you."

" Be pleased to state it," said Abu Obeida.

"You are doubtless acquainted, my lord," returned our hero, "whereabouts Sultan Solyman is at present?"

"Why, in sooth, young Frank, you could scarcely apply to any Ottoman, in all Erdély, so competent as myself to give you information on that score," returned Abu Obeida, glancing a look of peculiar intelligence on the janissary captain, who rode, not quite abreast, at his bridle hand.

"Then, my lord," said Sigismund, producing the unsealed missive from his vest, "I have only this to say,—you will amply reward me, for whatever service I may have had the good fortune to render you, if you will only transmit this paper, with all possible despatch, and by sure hands, to your gracious master." And, making an obeisance, not exactly in keeping with his characteristic style of dress, Sigismund presented the paper to the Emir.

Abu Obeida received it, with a mixture of indifference and curiosity. His eye lit on the superscription—"*For the Sultan Solyman*"—he repeated, "brief!—short, hey, Halis? brief address! the Sultan Solyman!*—So, most easily requited, Frank. If I understand you right, you would

* Brief, hey, Halis?—Brief in comparison with the sultan's enumeration of titles, in a letter to Ferdinand, running thus:—"I, the lord of lords, ruler of the East and of the West, who am of power to do, or not to do whatsoever pleaseth me, lord of all Græcia, Persia, and Arabia, commander of all things which can be subject to king and command, the great worthy of these times, and strong champion of the most wide world, lord of all the White and Black Sea, and of the holy city of Mecca, shining with the brightness of God, and of the city of Medina, and of the holy and chaste city of Jerusalem; King of the most noble kingdom of Egypt, lord of Jonia, and of the city of Athens, signor of the sacred temple of God, Zabilon and Bassio, Rethjan and Magodim, the seat and throne of the great king Nashim Retham, and lord of the island of Algiers; Prince of the kingdoms of Tartary, Mesopotamia Media, of the Georgians, Morea, Anatolia, Asia, Armenia, Valachia, Moldavia, and of all Hungary, and of many other kingdoms and territories, whereof I am emperor, the most mighty monarch Sultan Solyman, son of the great emperor

wish the contents of this letter to be perused by his highness, without any delay that can be avoided."

"Exactly so, sir," replied Sigismund, with some haughtiness, not altogether approving the peculiar, and sinister expression of countenance, with which he could not help fancying, the Emir regarded him.

"Well, sir," observed Abu Obeida, "you must be informed, that never is any kind of document or petition considered by the sultan, without having previously fallen under the inspection of the individual by your side. You are so far fortunate—the missive is not sealed, I see—so—by your leave ——"

"Sir Emir," cried Sigismund, in manifest anger—"if such be your title—I will not permit this. That writing you hold in your hands, is of such import, that it can be submitted to no meaner eyes, than those of Solyman; therefore, if you do not think fit, to lay it before the emperor unread,—I would be obliged by your returning it into my hands."

"You are strangely captious, methinks, sir Frank,"

Sultan Selim, who hath power from God to rule all people with a bridle, and strength to break open the gates and bars of all cities and strong places, unto whose mighty hands are delivered all the ends of the world, none excepted; I, the ruler of the East from the island of Isein unto the furthest bounds of Africa, whom God hath appointed a mighty warrior in the edge of the sword, amongst whose most mighty kingdom, the impregnable castle of Cæsaria is reputed for the least, and in whose hereditary dominions the kingdom or empire of Alexander the Great is accounted of as a trifle, with me is the strength of the whole world, and virtue of the firmament. For as much as thou king Ferdinand, and elected emperor of the Roman people, of Bohemia, Vandalia, Crabatia, and many other countries, king and lord."

The following commencement of an epistle addressed to Henry VIII., copied from a record in the Heralds' College, is also curious. "I king of kings, and lord of lords, emperor of Babylon, steward of Hell, porter of Paradise, constable of Jerusalem, flower of the Universe, and cousin to the great God."

There is moreover cited, a speech of Solyman to John of Zapola, by Laurentius Toppeltinus, Ortus et Occasus Transilv. p. 174, seq. that far out-herods either of the foregoing. It is too long to insert.

returned the Emir, " I would only open your letter, as a necessary preliminary to Solyman's being speedily made accquainted with its contents. A moment ago, you desired me to use all despatch herein, and now complain of my attention to your wish: if the matter of this paper be not meant to be subjected to my perusal, why, then,"—and the Emir smiled and shrugged his shoulders; " by the tomb of Mahomet! Sultan Solyman shall and will never be cognizant of it."

" We will try that, sir," said Sigismund, with considerable dignity; " at all events, I shall seek another, if not a trustier messenger. From the latest intelligence of the sultan's movements, I am aware that, not long since, he was camped in the White City,* thither, in the first instance, I shall forward my epistle. Restore it to me, sir Emir."

Sigismund held out his hand to receive back the folded paper; but Abu Obeida, as if totally indifferent to the action, carelessly observed, " 'Tis now nearly a month, I trow, since Sultan Solyman left Belgrade — your letter cannot reach its destination more directly, than through my hands."

" But itsi ntegrity!" began Sigismund; when the Emir interrupted him, and assuming a mien and mode of address, uncommonly dignified, said, in a low deep voice, every tone of which was instinct with command, and majesty; " Enough of this, young Frank, the integrity of your letter cannot be tampered with, before it reaches the personage to whom it is superscribed; for I, who hold it, am myself Sultan Solyman."

Sigismund at once felt, that this avowal needed not corroboration, and he was only surprised at himself, that he had not before surmised the fact. He instantly made a deep reverence; but even in that obeisance of his head, sat grace and dignity, — his was the respectful acknow-

* Belgrade.

ledgment of the body, but not the prostration of the spirit, and indicated rather the humility of an equal, than the servility of a vassal.

"Now, we hope, we may read your petition, sir stranger," said the Imperial Mussulman, with a smile, "and, mark us, Halis," he added, turning to the captain of janissaries, "after the good service which this youth hath this day rendered us, we cannot do less, we think, than accord whatever boon, he may, peradventure, seek in this little memorial, for such I take the paper to be, and, by the head of the sultan! I herewith vow, provided his request be within our competence, to grant it *par avance*,—yea, though he ask us to gift him, with every acre of territory, the victory of Mohacs subjected to our dominion." Even as these last words fell from his thin lips, Solyman (for we shall henceforth drop his *nom-de-guerre* of Abu Obeida), unfolded the letter, and immediately proceeded to acquaint himself with its contents. Slowly his eye passed to and fro across the paper, with an air of languid curiosity, which, as he read on, deepened into positive interest; he paused, and an insensible change came over the sallow features of the mighty emperor. His full dark orbs seemed to start from out their sockets, as if to meet, half way, the incredible information they were conveying to his mind. After awhile, he withdrew his eyes from the paper, and fixed them, with an earnest expression of surprise and interest upon Sigismund, who rode on, a silent, but deeply interested observer of the sultan. Anon, he returned to the consideration of the writing, which he read again, more attentively. Presently, he re-intermitted his task, and, crumbling the paper in his hand, as if in unconscious nervousness, addressed himself to Sigismund — "Sir stranger," he abruptly asked, "where — where is he, who entrusted you with this letter?—the writer, I would say?"

"I am myself the writer," replied Sigismund.

"How?" ejaculated the sultan.

Sigismund bowed.

"Dost thou mean to tell me," cried Solyman, with a gesture of impatience, "that thou art the individual, commonly called Count Rodna?"

"I have that honour, my lord," said Sigismund.

Solyman regarded our hero attentively for more than a minute's space, ere he again spoke, and then his words dropped lowly, as if, uttered unconsciously, in answer to his own thoughts. "I make no doubt of it—I perceived, from the first, his seeming was beneath his real station in life—*Allah Achbar!*—God is great!" Then, after a minute's pause, he continued, more audibly, "Have you assurance of the truth of this matter, sir count?" he said; "ample,—sufficient,—proof that will defy cavil;—evidence,—that the whole world must admit? Have you such assurance, I ask, sir?"

"It exists, and may be got at. Two points of evidence only, are still amissing, which would prove irrefragable—decisive; and these, I trust, shortly to obtain," replied Sigismund.

"And what be they, sir?" demanded Solyman.

"The one is, the testimony of Peter Count Pereny,—long supposed dead; the other ——," Sigismund stopped short.

"Well, sir," repeated Solyman, "the other?"

"The crown of Hungary," said Sigismund.

"What evidence were that?" cried Solyman in a disdainful tone; "methinks the crown of Hungary were easily forthcoming, upon a lawful occasion."

"The evidence would be as a revelation from Heaven," replied Sigismund, "but it is hard to come at."

"I comprehend not your meaning, either way," said the sultan; "but I have pledged myself, even to the extent of thy request; and more, thou hast saved my life—

and more — the man, *whom I*,——," the sultan stopped: his eyes glistened and flared with a triumphant, but at the same time, malevolent excitement, and there was a significance, in the very bridling of his speech, which might bear some similitude to the bitter and minatory abruption of Neptune, in the immortal epic — "And more,"—he would have added, had he given voice to his deliberate thoughts — "I shall hereby plant a thorn in the side of the man, who, only last eve, insulted me in a manner, never to be forgotten, or forgiven—and nicely accord the mode of my revenge, to the nature of its provocation." Solyman presently resumed, "I ask you, Count Rodna," he said, "as a man of honour, dost thou, thyself, believe in the truth of that wonderful thing, which thou hast herein affirmed?"

"On my honour, I entertain not the shadow of a doubt of its verity," replied Sigismund.

"Then your hand, brother," cried Solyman; "I read all the assurance I require in thy voice, and conduct."

Sigismund extended his hand, and the sultan taking it within his own, grasped it firmly.

"Now, by my sword and crown!" he exclaimed, "I pledge myself to see you righted; and, from this hour, the whole resources of my empire shall be devoted to that object."

"It will not come to such extremity, I hope," replied Sigismund, with a smile, "though not the less I thank you; but, my lord, at the time I had the fortune to encounter you, I was journeying on a matter of life and death. I have to entreat your permission now to proceed."

"We part soon, considering our acquaintance is not an hour old, and that our friendship promises to be as lasting, as our lives," said Solyman; "but go thy ways, brother — go thy ways, and good fortune go along with

you." The sultan and Sigismund then interchanged mutual obeisances, and the next minute our hero and his attendant were seen outstripping the very wind, in their eagerness to redeem the time, that Sigismund had employed, in making himself known to Solyman the Magnificent.

MANUSCRIPT XXIV.

"The villany you teach me, I will execute: and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction."—*Shylock.*

Count Ragotzy, after having outstripped the pursuit of Banffy's attendants, was not long in arriving, at the advanced outposts of the beleaguering army. He gave himself up to the first party, which he fell in with, and communicated his wish, to obtain instant access to the Marquis of Piadena.

It was not until Ragotzy's repeated assurances of the momentous nature of his tidings, and his positive refusal to declare them to any person, excepting the general-in-chief, that the officer in command was prevailed upon, to undertake the somewhat thankless office of rousing the marquis, and receiving his orders upon the matter. After a short period of suspense, the pretended Jew was conducted through the encampment, to a stately pavilion, rising above the surrounding tents, in front of which the standard of Austria rolled out its ample folds. In a few minutes he was ushered into the interior, which was fitted up with hangings of rich brocade, and decorated with fluttering pennons. He perceived, that he stood in the presence of the imperial chief, who, having hastily thrown a loose robe around his person, was now sitting on the side of his military couch.

Baptista Castaldo was one of the most redoubted captains, that Europe at that time possessed. He had been educated in the school of the celebrated Pescara, and, "if more be wanting to his fame," says the historian, "it may be added, that he enjoyed the friendship, though he hardly merited the praise, of the man, '*sans peur et sans reproche.*'" At the time of his invasion of Transylvania, he was in the meridian of his age, and of his reputation. His carriage was conspicuously military, and his classically-chiselled features, too, *prononcée* to be otherwise handsome, were military also.

"Israelite," commenced the chief, "I can tell thee thou hadst best have good warranty for breaking my slumbers at this deep hour. What hast to say to me?"

Ragotzy cast an expressive glance towards the attendants, who waited at the entrance of the pavilion.

"Retire, sirs, and remain within call," said the marquis; "and now," he continued, when the men-at-arms had withdrawn, "what is this business? What costly gem, rich shawl, or necklace of pearl, hast to dispose of?"

Ragotzy made no immediate reply, but throwing aside his outward disguise, stood before the marquis in his brigand costume.

"Ha! Alaric Polgar!" exclaimed Castaldo.

"Right, minister of Ferdinand," replied the Cygani leader; "ere now I have humbly contributed to your lordship's ends. I have come to proffer my further aid."

"After what fashion, sir?" demanded Castaldo, with some coolness.

"In the old mode, an' it please your lordship," observed the leader, with a meaning smile.

"I can dispense with your services, sir—no more need be said;" answered Castaldo.

"Nay, my lord," said Ragotzy, "you have gained some years' experience since we last met; and years, they say, bring wisdom; but my little knowledge of human

nature makes me doubt, whether, if life were lengthened out to the span of the Hebrew of old, any single earnest passion of the heart could become quite extinct, and least of all *revenge*."

"Revenge!" repeated Castaldo; "the word knells upon my memory, as of some unquiet dream. But now, sir," he continued, laying his hand on his heart, "all is at peace here, hushed as the still grave—"

"You thought you'd dug for *him*," said Ragotzy, with quickness. "Ay, I understand; but have you never heard speak of uncharnelled forms walking the upper world? *What, if your victim rose?*"

"I comprehend you not, but say on," answered Castaldo.

"When first I knew your lordship in Vienna," said the Cygani, "I was a very boy, only gifted, perhaps, with more than a boy's shrewdness; I guessed, that from the moment *the exile* aspired to the hand of the sister of the emperor, he acquired your hatred. Queen Mary was *the fair object of your ambition*, but HE proffered himself; and, I need not add, that, under certain stipulations, the hand of the widow of king Lewis of Hungary, was promised him for a guerdon."

"This can answer no end," said Castaldo, haughtily; "we had best terminate our interview."

"By your leave, I would subjoin a few brief syllables," said Ragotzy.

"See they be brief, then," returned Castaldo; "nor trust too far to our indulgence."

"There was another lady," resumed Ragotzy.

"I'll hear no more," broke in Castaldo, with some heat. "Depart, sir, as you came."

"She was *the fair object of your love*," proceeded Ragotzy, without regarding the frowns of the marquis. She, the daughter of Jerome Lascus, proved your adder—cut your heart in twain—and married HIM—the EXILE."

"What is all this?" cried Castaldo; and his eyes

flashed fire as he spoke. "Are you aweariedof your life? Damnation! Sirrah, curb your insolence."

"Hushed as is the grave!" said Ragotzy, with a sneer. "The dead can rise, you see."

"Another word, and I'll call for whips—fetters. Slave! I'll have thee hanged on the highest tree within our lines," cried the exasperated marquis.

"You had better not, my lord," retorted Ragotzy, "lest I proclaim the story to the whole camp."

"Incomparable scoundrel!" cried Piadena, making an involuntary movement of his hand towards his sword, which lay in the scabbard beside him.

"I am armed, too," said Ragotzy, composedly; and loosening in its leathern sheath the weapon, which he had abstracted from the belt of Banffy. "But hear me to the end, your excellency, and you may thank me for my communication."

Castaldo preserved his countenance of stern indignation, but made no reply.

"Well, my lord," proceeded Ragotzy; "Thus doubly rivalled in love and in policy, and defeated alike in both, you so inflamed the rage of Charles and Ferdinand, against the vacillating EXILE, for the dishonour put upon their imperial house, by his marriage with Lascus' daughter, at the very time, he stood engaged to their sister, that they threw him into bondage; and on his escape from thence, they consented to disseminate those seeds of murder, which ——, no, never shall I forget the glow of exultation, with which you placed the proclamation in my hands, and bade me put it into execution. 'Alaric,' you said, 'faithful Alaric,—noble leader!'—spending such politic breath, that the air grew rank with your cozenage, but I smiled the while, and taking the document, pledged myself, to leave no stone unturned, till I had compassed the reward."

"And yet, for all your fine promises, he breathed his last in his bed," observed Castaldo, scornfully.

"So it was *given out*," said Ragotzy.

"Given out," repeated Castaldo; "what boots it, ripping up the graves of dead men? Pshaw! Pereny died in his bed, I say, years ago." Ragotzy made no reply, but gave Castaldo a look, which spoke volumes.—"What, did he not? in Styria? was't not of a pestilence?" demanded Castaldo, with wild earnestness.

"My lord, he lives," said Ragotzy.

"Lives! Peter Pereny lives! You lie, scoundrel! it cannot be. And I live to hear it!" exclaimed the marquis. He rose from the low couch, and rapidly paced the narrow space of the thickly carpeted pavilion. His countenance grew livid, and assumed a perfectly diabolical expression,—his teeth set, and his eyes started from their sockets. "Alive!" he proceeded, in a voice of thunder, rather accelerating his pace than otherwise, as he spoke;—"And free!—where?" He stopped as he was passing the brigand, and repeated,—"Where, I say?" With these words, the marquis leant his face so forward, that it almost touched that of the Cygani.

"In Hermanstadt," replied Ragotzy. Castaldo recoiled. "I saw him within these last few days. More, I spoke with him."

"You spoke with him? in his proper person?" said Castaldo.

"Why no, verily," replied Ragotzy, with a laugh; "the mighty magnat was so altered in his outward man, that the daughter of the palatine of Seradia herself would not have recognised him. "He is grown familiar to a certain Father Dominick, you may have heard tell of."

"In Hermanstadt?" reiterated Castaldo.

"In Hermanstadt, my lord."

"He *there* living, and thou *here* to tell me? No—no—no. Why, the proclamation hath never been recalled; the gold is forthcoming,—and thy dagger ——"

"Is at your lordship's service," broke in Ragotzy; "if you can make your assertions appear."

"Of course, I can," said Castaldo; "what do you mean?"

"You will bear in mind, my lord," said Ragotzy; "that when those proclamations were first put forth, you were the confidential minister of the archduke; and even then, with difficulty, you prevailed on the imperial brothers, to yield so far to your simulated zeal for their honour, as to suffer the circulation of those bloody instruments. Since those days, what changes have not taken place in the aspect of the world! Queen Mary is no longer the injured, and the forsaken, but reigns the governess of the Low Countries. Her favoured rival, is pale and marrowless,—whose bridal sheets are turned to winding ones; and whose once envied couch is the cold tomb." Castaldo groaned.—"Pereny has now been so long reputed dead, that if his resurrection resuscitate bitter memories, it will be without their sting. And you yourself, what influence can you have? Think you, my lord, that what you found so hard to prevail upon the emperor to authorize, in times of trust and favour, you would have now the remotest chance of accomplishing." Castaldo turned fiercely from the Cygani, and traversed the tent as before,. "You," continued Count Ragotzy, "flying to Vienna in disgrace; an ambassador, foiled in diplomacy,—a captain worsted in pitched battle; of all the hoarded reputation you brought with you against our *seven cities** not a particle remaining, of all the army entrusted to your command; yourself, perchance, the only living herald of its utter destruction! No, Marquis of Piadena, I would not act on the royal warrant, you spake of, which the lapse of time, and circumstances, have long annulled."

Castaldo stopped short his walk, and turned paler than before. "Merciful Heaven!" he cried, "what riddle is this you hint at? Since thou hast sketched my

* Transylvania; so designated of old.

destiny on the wall, perchance thou canst read the writing."

"In flame, my lord, and blood," returned Ragotzy, solemnly, "I can,—hearken then;" and resuming his earnest attitude, he proceeded without further preface, briefly to unfold to the electrified marquis, the critical situation of his army; and as a confirmation of his intelligence, extended towards Castaldo, the open letter of Quendi Ferens.

The marquis eagerly seized the paper, and as his eye passed hastily over its contents, his anxious countenance rapidly deepened, into an expression of positive anguish. The paper fell from the chieftain's hold, and with distended visage, stretched palms, lips wide apart, and each particular hair on end,

"Like quills upon the fretful porcupine,"

Piadena stood, like a man paralyzed. He had received despatches from Antoine Ferraro, only the day before, and from the tenor of his secretary's communication, had been lulled into the most complete security. Having never learned the full extent of Martinuzzi's preparations, he felt persuaded, that the regent, with the throne in prospect, would necessarily remain an inactive spectator of the siege of Coloswar. If the marquis could have dived into the heart of the man, he hoped to cajole or to intimidate, he must have been aware of the hostile intentions of Martinuzzi, and might perhaps have anticipated the circumstance of his rapid march, in which case, the imperial outposts and the advanced guard of the regent would have come into contact, before the difficult passage of the Samos had been effected. As it was, but for one of those unlooked-for chances, which sometimes, in war, disappoint the finest calculations, the imperialists must have been totally annihilated, by the combined armies of Turkey and Transylvania. The idea of his having been circumvented by

Martinuzzi, with all the attendant consequences of ruin and loss of reputation, now darted through the brain of the marquis, seeming to whirl his sense in a most horrid vortex. But in this state he was not long suffered to continue.

"Recover your senses, my lord," said Ragotzy, "and tell me, will he not merit mighty things, who shall extricate you from your perilous situation?"

"Who can deliver me?" said Castaldo, in the accents of despair.

"Certainly not standing there inactive; but, I both can, and will," replied Ragotzy; "if you make it worth my while."

"Explain yourself farther," said Castaldo.

"First, my lord, issue orders, that your army be drawn out to receive the enemy: you may look for Quendi Ferens' assault, every moment."

"Right," said the marquis: "I will just say three words to Count Salm, and be back instantly."

"Mind, my lord, I wait not any man's pleasure, for long," said Ragotzy, as Castaldo left the tent.

After a short time, the rolling of the warning drums, disturbed the deep stillness of the hour, and the slumber of the camp was broken.

When the marquis re-entered, he appeared more composed. "Now, Alaric Polgar," he said; "in what way can you bring your services, to bear upon this strait of ours?"

"You are already answered, in part, by my giving you this timely warning," replied Ragotzy: and then he proceeded to reveal to Castaldo, the conspiracy of the Hungarian magnats, which not only included a sure execution of their own vengeance, but afforded, to the Austrian general, fresh hopes of victory. "What is more than this," concluded the Cygani; "I myself know a spell, to retard the advance of Achamates, till after the event: when, if victorious, you can easily elude his powers. This will I effect, besides bringing to your

aid my small and determined band, if you, to save yourself, in your present exigence, please to subscribe our terms."

"Please you to state them, sir," said Castaldo.

"They are nearly the same, as were granted to Peter Pereny, when an emigrant in Vienna," answered Ragotzy; "namely, that Transylvania, and the adjoining bannats, be considered as a fief of Austria." *

"And *whom*, sir, would you put in the place of that person, who, by his intended marriage with the relict of King Lewis, might, perhaps, have had some pretension to the honour of reigning over this realm?"

"*Him*, who now purposeth to unite himself to the rightful heiress of the throne," returned Ragotzy.

"By the rightful heiress, you must mean the late King John's daughter,—" said Castaldo, "purposeth to unite himself! The lady's guardian, I suspect, will spoil him for a bridegroom;— but what's he, who, as the feudatory of Ferdinand, looks to be king in Transylvania?"

"Behold him in ME!" replied the brigand.

"Ah!" ejaculated the marquis.

"The conjuror, who can work such miracles for Austria," rejoined Ragotzy, "as to save your army in its present emergency, deserves no meaner requital; especially since 'tis a matter of indifference, to that individual, whether he mount the throne, with Ferdinand's consent, or in spite of that potentate, and as a consequence of his general's defeat."

The amazement of Castaldo, was too great for expression, and, for some moments, he stood gazing in the face of the brigand, in pure wonderment. At last he

* "Il est bon de savoir que dans le tems que Ferdinand ceda la Transylvanie au Perenne, il lui ceda aussi tous les comtés qui sont au dehors, á l'enceinte de cette Province, comme ceux de Giula, du Grand Varadie, de Sacmart, Kuvard, Nagibanie et le Marmaros, avec les villes, chateaux, et villages qui en pouvoient dependre."

found words. "Is it possible that you speak of yourself, sir?" he demanded.

"Most certain," said Ragotzy; "but time presses for both;—your decision, my lord?"

"How can I be sure," said the politic marquis, evasively, and after a long pause, "that I am in the predicament you state?— that an attack *is* impending, from Martinuzzi?— that these conspiring nobles *will* take part with me?— that the Turk *is* in my rear? What have you to offer, in evidence of such incredible marvels?"

"*The event!*" said Ragotzy; "the most minute segment of the cycle of your lordship's life, will witness for me. I, however, do not choose to dally away in talk, that teeming evolution. Am I to reckon on Austria's favourable countenance, in case I ever win Hungaria's queen, and come to wear Hungaria's coronet? I ask no aid,— neutrality is all I demand, in return for my gratifying at once, in an eminent degree, both your resentment, and your ambition."

"My resentment?" exclaimed Castaldo.

"Ay," said Ragotzy; "I will undertake, that the man you love so dearly, or that counterfeit African, for they are one and the same, shall cease to walk the vaults of Hermanstadt, or breathe the upper air, if his removal will incline you to favour my views."

"What, will you so?" cried Castaldo eagerly.

"Ay, verily," said Ragotzy; "only render me a memorandum, in your capacity of representative of Austria, of your recognition of the future husband of the heiress of Hungary, for king of this realm; and by the Lord who made him! Peter Pereny dies, ere this day se'ennight, if so my own life reach that term."

Castaldo pondered deeply for a moment, pacing up and down the apartment. He paused. "These Hungarian chiefs will fight to-day, on the side of Austria?" he said.

"To some purpose, or I much mistake," replied Ragotzy.

The marquis resumed his walk. "You promise you can, and will, suspend the advance of the basha?" he presently continued, again stopping short.

"You may rely on the Ottoman remaining stationary; since I guess," he added, "such to be his policy; though he'd hardly ask my concurrence, if he purposed otherwise."

This was uttered *sotto voce*. Castaldo's ear caught not the words. For the third time he made a halt, directly in front of Ragotzy.

"Valiant leader," he said, with a tone of deep and serious emphasis; "that matter of the death of Pereny, stands a part of our covenant;—thou art ready to serve me therein?"

"Oh, of course—of course!" returned his companion.

"Alaric Polgar," said Castaldo; "you *shall* have the memorandum you require;" and taking some paper from a small portefeuile, that lay convenient, the marquis proceeded to scratch the necessary instrument. Abruptly he raised his head. "I had best designate her highness by name?" he observed.

"No, no," responded Ragotzy, "the heiress of Hungary will suffice,—what matters for a name?"

"What matters, indeed!" said Castaldo internally; "Ferdinand meant to bestow that painted baby, Czerina, on his victorious general; but true policy is pliant as wax, and changes its form, and features, according to circumstances."

Having, by this time, hastily traced one or two lines, the important writing was delivered into the hands of Ragotzy, who prepared to depart.

"Pereny dies?" interrogated Castaldo, solemnly, drawing very near to his associate, and lowering his voice, almost to a whisper.

"*Pereny dies!*" replied the Cygani leader more au-

dibly, and accompanying the affirmation with most significant gesture. He said, and quitted the tent.

Having got beyond the Austrian lines, he darted over hill and dale, at such a round pace, as soon brought him to the troglodyte hold of his formidable band. He let himself down, through the same yawning crevice of the earth, by which he introduced Vicchy to his rifted territory, as related in an earlier manuscript. Within the cave, all was pitchy dark. The brigand passed on, with unpausing step, through this gloomy vestibule of his subterranean habitation, saying to himself, "How is this? No order—no observance—no outpost! Now, what the foul fiend! imports this negligence?"

He entered a smaller chamber;—all there was still: he turned away, and directed his hurried steps, along a winding passage, leading to the dormitory of his men. He had proceeded but a few paces, when the sound of a human voice, deep and hollow, suddenly knelled on his ear.

"Alaric, come hither," it said.

He diverged into a deep recess. No ray of light, found its way to this "obscure sojourn,"—the dank, palpable atmosphere was black as ink. He stood in the midst.

"Forbear!" said the voice; "go not to witness a sight, that will drive you frantic with amaze; remain in ignorance, till to-morrow."

"Mother, what hath chanced?" said Ragotzy: "Why do I find you here? Why alone, and in darkness?

"In this chamber," answered Unna, "during many hours, have I lain in wait, against your return, to save your eyes a prospect, more blinding than the utter gloom, that shrouds the spot where we stand."

"Ha! what am I to augur from your words?" said Ragotzy; "All so still—no watch—no movement—is this cavern evacuated? Is the band of Alaric Polgar fled?"

"One man only, of all your troop is absent," replied Unna; "the rest lie lapped under their sparry roof,—in sleep."

"The rascals!" cried Ragotzy; "I will but rouse them, and return."

"Nay, stay, Alaric," cried Unna earnestly.

"I cannot loiter," said the leader; "I have work to put them to, and every minute is precious."

"Yet go not hence, till you hear."

"I will be back, I tell you," answered the brigand impatiently.

"Leave me not, I implore you," shrieked Unna; "'tis to no end; your men are——"

"What?" eagerly demanded Ragotzy. "Why do you stop short? Nay, if you will not answer, let me go myself, and witness with my own eyes."

"A sight to blast them!" said Unna. "Away then, but be prepared for horrors dire, and of unheard of moment. Go! and return."

Ragotzy rushed out of the cell, and the next instant, passed into the common sleeping-room. It was a lofty, and a spacious chamber, dimly lighted up by a cresset, that hung suspended from the roof. The whole band lay stretched in their ordinary dress, upon the floor; and for a few seconds, Ragotzy could discern nothing, that might tend to explain the dismal, and uncertain intimation of evil, with which his mother had deemed it expedient to forewarn his soul. The low, nasal, and inharmonious chorus, proper to the hour and the apartment, pervaded the dormitory, and Ragotzy was about to scare them from their slumber, by the thunder of his voice, when a ghastly and multitudinous spectacle, pierced his sight;—he stood transfixed, for at his feet was spread *a tumulose heap of gory human hands.* He gasped for breath, as his eye ranged distractedly, from the pile of amputated members, to the dreaming forms of his bandit followers;—and who can judge the emotions of the

leader, at beholding the maimed right arm, of one and all of the sleepers, terminate in a bandaged stump ?* The yell he set up was infernal, and it reverberated through the vaults, like the agonized expression of a fiend. Loud, however, as it was discordant, it failed to startle, from his heavy trance, a single individual, of all that crippled banditti ; and, but for their troubled breathing, it would have seemed, that only the summoning trump, at the last day, would rouse them from so deep and unnatural a slumber. For another instant, Ragotzy bore to gaze around him, and then rushed, like one possessed, from the fatal chamber, to that dark recess, where he had left his mother, Unna. Neither spoke, for some minutes.

" I have looked upon the bloody vision," said Ragotzy, at length, with forced calmness, from between his clenched teeth, — " I have looked, — I have gazed my fill, — and I come for explanation. Whosoever compassed this deed, is he liable, think you, to human modes of vengeance ? — *has he hands himself*, feet, head, heart ? Can he be reached, tortured, — *tortured like me*, — and racked to atomies ? — Has he," proceeded the maddened leader, and his constrained enunciation heightened into a harsh scream, — " has he flesh and blood ? Oh, tell me, only tell me, he is of mortal mould ?"

" He is," answered Unna, " and vulnerable, most vulnerable."

" Well, well," said Ragotzy, with gasping breath, " and his name, good mother ? Oh, be speedy ! *give me something to curse.*"

" Your late prisoner ; he I bade you so emphatically hold in secure durance ; — he, you weakly let escape you."

" The lunatic ?" cried Ragotzy, in the deep guttural tones of irrepressible amazement,— " was't he did it ?"

* Founded on a fact of the times in Transylvania.

"The lunatic!" repeated Unna, mockingly; — "tush, son! he you call so, is as sane, as formidable."

"Formidable!" echoed Ragotzy; "would he were, to meet the might of vengeance! — but how know you it was he?"

"He was the primal cause," said Unna; "his agent and confederate in the horrid act, was one of your own men, named Walter. I met the slave without the cave, as he came reeking from the slaughter; — he dared boast to me, how he had first drugged, and then maimed his comrades."

"Did the infernal traitor assign a motive?" demanded Ragotzy.

"He did; — that, the other day, you felled him in your heat, that youth being by. You quitted the spot instantly, when he, Sigismund, politicly raised the false knave from the earth, and offered him a command in the troop of Iwan, if he would renounce the profession of a bandit. His weighty promises struck, nicely-timed, on the heated soul of Walter; to that sudden league, you owe this massacre, and more, — the escape of Sigismund and Veronica. To him — *to Sigismund* — the daughter of Vicchy whispered, how Alaric Polgar killed his reputed grandsire, for, by some means, that night she penetrated your disguisement."

The bandit grasped the hilt of his dagger, and gnashed his teeth in fury. "Death! and hell! and ——"

"Nay, hear further," interrupted Unna; "Walter told me, in mocking defiance, he overheard all this; and added somewhat, that I will not mention, of the youth's vows of vengeance; moreover he, the traitor, jeeringly bade me tell my son, how he well knew, from their frequent colloquies, that Count Rodna would shortly obtain the lady's hand, and *that*, without dragging her, a reluctant victim, to the altar. Had I had a weapon, Alaric, I would have answered him; but, unarmed, I was fain to endure the insulter's taunts, in silence."

"Hell! it is! — I'll clutch him yet; — but hell it is," cried Ragotzy, "to think the wretch can die but once!" He paused, and his hands clenched, and unclenched, with nervous irritation. "How said you?" he presently resumed, — "Sigismund wed the heiress of Baron Walstein, mother! An exquisite bed-fellow, i' faith, he'll find her, or I err; — *'tis a shrewd wench!*" and the brigand laughed bitterly. "But no more of that — the match must be prevented; — the crown of Hungary is at stake!"

"The crown of Hungary!" echoed Unna, with an ineffable scornfulness of accent.

"Ay, mother, is it not?" cried Ragotzy, almost breathless.

"Alaric! Alaric!" returned his mother, in a most deep and solemn tone of voice, "that Sigismund hath no need to wed the daughter of Vicchy, to compass the crown of Hungary, he being himself the son of ——; but, lest the tell-tale air catch the sound, hark to an unmatched secret in thine ear," — *she whispered.*

The brigand started back. "Now, by my soul!" he exclaimed, as the truth began to dawn upon him, "I feel a stern gladness stirring within me, — the youth wil prove no ignoble sacrifice. Formerly, from being so much with Peter, Count Pereny, at Count Rodna's, I deemed him his son by Lascus's daughter, and, as such, agreeably to the imperial will, would have cut him off with his father, on that night, you wot off; but doth he know as much?"

"I doubt it not," said Unna; "Luke Swartz hath assuredly acquainted him with his origin. And that reminds me, I have an account to settle with that false keeper. I have him safe, and, may this right hand fail me, an' he be not safer this night! Do you purpose joining the battle, that to-day impendeth."

"I did, to the regent's ruin, — but that is over now," said Ragotzy.

"Mark me, Alaric! if you ever touch but a hair of that man's head, woe! woe! temporal and eternal woe be on thee!"

"I will not stay to hear thee," said Ragotzy, — "I must arm me for vengeance. Sigismund may be in the fight."

"For him," said Unna, "spare him not; *but Martinuzzi's person is sacred.* Will you visit, to-morrow, the village of Mount Hielen? — I would speak further with you touching these matters. Shall I await you there?"

"You may," said Ragotzy.

"For certain?" demanded Unna.

"As sure as that I breathe."

"Farewell, then, my dear son!"

"Farewell, dear mother!"

They parted. Oh! how sweet, how ineffably sweet, is the affection of such close connection! and, even in the depths of the hardest heart, how triumphant doth it rise over the consciousness of crime! The sins of Unna were mighty, and, we believe, we have somewhere said, that those of Ragotzy were without redemption, — perhaps we erred; — for, oh! these partners in iniquity loved one another, and what hell will not such love convert, at times, to heaven?

END OF VOL. II.

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